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NON-VIOLENCE

IN

PEACE & WAR

Vol. I

M. K. GANDHI

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NON-VIOLENCE IN EVOLUTION

Scientific discoveries make books on the various sciences out of date within a short time of their publication. A student of medicine reading books on the aetiology of cancer, for instance, would go to the latest books on the subject, and reject one published two or even one decade ago. Books on surgery published fifty years ago, however valuable then, would not, at an old bookseller's, fetch even the cost of printing them. A monument of research and industry, Hume's *History of England*, is not read nowadays, as historical research since its publication has made many statements of fact inaccurate or untrue.

Not so, however, with books of spiritual science. Sage Patanjali gave his Yoga aphorisms centuries ago. Books about the date of Patanjali written fifty years ago would be displaced by later researches. But no commentary, provided it is written by one who has tried to carry out the aphorisms in actual practice, can be out of date, no matter when it was written. For each represents the result of the author's spiritual experience and growth, and every step towards the goal of self-realization offers help and guidance to pilgrims on the path. Every such pilgrim is an experimenter in the laboratory of Truth which is Infinite. The discovery of Truth will never be complete, and any honest record of earnest striving has its value. It is from that point of view that this book, which reproduces chronologically all the most important writings of Gandhiji on the subject of Non-violence, is of the greatest value to those who will follow Truth at all costs and who recognize that Non-violence is the road to that pursuit. This is all the more so when one realizes that Gandhiji's experiments in Truth and Non-violence are not only in pursuit of Truth but also in pursuit of aims which one describes as mundane. Prof. Toynbee, the celebrated Research Professor of International History, has, in the monumental volumes of *A Study of History*, drawn this distinction. "Gentleness" — which he says, might equally well be called 'Non-violence'—looks a superficial negative label, but carefully examined it "covers more than one positive reality", and he reveals four distinct positive meanings of the term. Thus "at its lowest the practice of Non-violence may express nothing more noble or more constructive than a cynical disillusionment with the fruitlessness of a violence which has been previously

practised *ad nauseum* without having produced the intended results. A notorious example of a non-violence of this unedifying kind is the religious toleration which has been in vogue in the Western world from about the last quarter of the seventeenth century of the Christian era down to our own day. Alternatively, Non-violence may express a conviction that man's divinely allotted role in the economy of the universe is to adopt a patiently passive attitude towards a mundane scene on which it is God's exclusive prerogative to execute His divine will through His own action — which would be hampered and not assisted, if man were to presume to intervene in what is wholly God's business. Such is, for example, the conviction that underlies the Non-violence of *Agudath Israel.* This second philosophy of Non-violence is as pious and as scrupulous as our first is unprincipled and cynical; but at the same time it resembles the Non-violence of disillusionment in being unconstructive. Non-violence may, however, also be practised as a means to some constructive end; and such an end, again, may be either mundane or 'other-worldly'. A classic example of the practice of non-violence for a mundane end is presented in Mahatma Gandhi's political tactics of Non-violent Non-cooperation. The aim of Mr. Gandhi and his followers is to obtain for the people of India the political boon of complete self-government; and the pursuit of this aim by these tactics is evidence of a high degree of intellectual and moral originality; for the aim in view has been valued at its present enormously current price in a Western Vanity Fair; and our Western nationalists have seldom or never abstained from resorting to violence — of heart, if not of hand — in their endeavours to gain possession of this coveted pearl. Mr. Gandhi's tactical recourse of Non-violence is therefore a noteworthy new departure in the political technique of a Westernized 'Great Society'; but it is not, of course, so great a departure as a practice of Non-violence for reasons which are not just tactical but are strategic. While Mr. Gandhi practises Non-violence because he considers this to be the most efficacious means of pursuing an aim that is mundane, the Non-violence of Jesus and Johann ben Zakkai is a reflection on the mundane plane, of a transference of the field of action from that mundane plane to another."

But Prof. Arnold Toynbee does not quite see the reason why Gandhiji has dared to experiment the method of Non-

violence on the mundane plane. It is precisely because Gandhiji refuses to make any distinction between the mundane and the 'other-worldly' plane so far as the moral and physical laws which govern them are concerned. For him the outside universe is but a reflection of the inside universe, and he repeats time and again that "the universe is compressed in the atom. There is not one law for the atom and another for the universe." It is not only the eye of the poet that enables him

> To see a world in a grain of sand
> And a heaven in a wild flower,
> Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
> And Eternity in an hour.

but an actual spiritual experience that gives the conviction that moral principles have no meaning unless they can be made to serve as guides of conduct in the daily affairs of men. It is therefore as a steady growth and evolution of the meaning and implications of Non-violence that this volume deserves to be studied by all who aspire to practise it for mundane or ultra-mundane ends. There is no royal road to train individuals or communities in the difficult art of Non-violence, except, as he says, "through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon. The expression in one's own life presupposes great study, tremendous perseverance, and thorough cleansing of one's self of all the impurities." And then he reveals the tremendous superiority of the spiritual force over physical force: "If for mastering of the physical sciences you have to devote a whole lifetime, how many lifetimes may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known? But why worry even if it means several lifetimes? For, if this is the only thing in life, if this is the only thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent. Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else shall be added unto you. The Kingdom of Heaven is Ahimsa."

To outward seeming quite a number of contradictions will be found in this book—as, for instance, were pointed out by that great pacifist B. De Ligt who strongly criticized Gandhiji's participation in the Boer War and the First World War of 1914-18, which apparently is irreconcilable with his stubborn

opposition to the present war and all wars. Thus there was a time when he felt it necessary to say: "I would not hesitate to advise those who would bear arms to do so and fight for the country." Not that he visualized a Swaraj won by violence. "Under Swaraj of my dream there is no necessity for arms at all," he said, but added: "But I do not expect that dream to materialize in its fulness as a result of the present effort,"—he meant the Khilafat Struggle of 1921—"because I do not consider myself advanced enough to be able to prescribe a detailed course of conduct to the nation for such preparation." Again and again he used to say in those days: "I have not yet the attainments for preaching universal non-violence with effect." In one sentence he summed up the reason why even as a votary of non-violence he did not preach non-participation in 1914-18: "I had no status to resist participation"—by status meaning the status that service of the country and active practice of the principle for 29 years have given him now. By sufficient service he hoped then to attain some day "the power and confidence to resist the Empire's wars and its war-like preparations." There was a time when he thought in terms of his duty as a unit, however humble, of the Empire, and said that so long as he enjoyed the peace and security that "Pax Britannica" gave, it was his duty to serve the Empire. Today he continues to enjoy that "peace and security", but the peace is the peace of the grave and the security is the security of abject slaves. His soul, therefore, rebels against the Empire which now to him is a synonym for iniquity, and he has vowed incessant opposition to that Empire and its war. Even twenty years ago, he knew that India's impotence affects and corrupts the whole of mankind, but he realizes now as never before the implications of that knowledge. These are no contradictions. There is no more contradiction between them than there is between the root and the stem and the bark of a tree and its leaves and its flowers and its fruits. The same sap runs through all as the same passionate pursuit of Non-violence runs through Gandhiji's life as through all that he has thought and done, said and written. Let the student read, study, chew, and inwardly digest all that is included in this volume, and he will find that there is revealed in it the organic growth of a vital rule of life

as of a soul aspiring not only towards Self-realization, but also towards the emancipation of mankind from strife and bloodshed until, to use the words of Prof. Toynbee, "Violence annihilates itself and leaves Gentleness alone in the Field."

Bombay, 15-5-42

MAHADEV DESAI

CONTENTS

Non-violence in Evolution—Mahadev Desai 1
1. The Doctrine of the Sword 4
2. One Step Enough for Me 6
3. The Afghan Bogey 8
4. Our Neighbours 10
5. The Frontier Friends 12
6. The Afghan Alarm 15
7. Foreign Policy 16
8. Soldiers 17
9. Hindus in Afghanistan 19
10. My Part in the War 21
11. Why Did I Assist in the Last War? 24
12. How the Hope was Shattered 26
13. My Path 28
14. Under Swaraj 29
15. What of the West? 31
16. To American Friends 38
17. Compulsory Military Training 40
18. From Europe 46
19. European Civilization 49
20. A Question 50
21. Our Impotence 54
22. In Mitigation 56
23. War or Peace? 58
24. Has Non-violence Limits? 61
25. Non-resistance True and False 64
26. Stand for Non-violence 66
27. 'Humanizing War'! 68
28. War against War 70
29. Still at It 73
30. My Attitude towards War 75
31. 'What Are We to Do?' 78
32. 'My Attitude towards War' 82
33. Sword v. Spirit 83
34. For Conscience Sake 84
35. Women and War .. ..

36. A Complex Problem 86
37. The Kellogg Pact 89
38. Our Choice 92
39. Military Programme 95
40. Difficulty of Practice 99
41. Superstitions Die Hard 101
42. When the British Withdraw 104
43. Theory and Practice of Non-violence (M. D.) 105
44. The Greatest Force 110
45. A Talk on Non-violence (M. D.) 113
46. The Doom of Peace 116
47. God of Love, not War 117
48. The Law of Our Being 120
49. Teaching of Hinduism 123
50. Ahimsa Conundrums 124
51. A Discourse on Non-violence (M. D.) 127
52. Our Failure 133
53. An Appeal for Self-examination 135
54. The Choice 138
55. Martial v. Moral 141
56. More Posers (M. D.) 143
57. Qualifications of a Peace Brigade 144
58. The Question of Questions (M. D.) 146
59. Message to China (M. D.) 148
60. Logical Consequence 149
61. If I were a Czech 151
62. Woman's Special Mission 155
63. Why Not Great Powers ? 157
64. The Jews 159
65. How to Fight National Gangsterism ? (M. D.) 164
66. Reply to German Critics 165
67. Some Questions Answered 167
68. Non-violence and World Crisis (Pyarelal) 169
69. A Japanese Visitor (M. D.) 177
70. Is Non-violence Ineffective ? 179
71. China and Japan (M. D.) 181
72. A World in Agony—I (Pyarelal) 183
73. A World in Agony—II (Pyarelal) 192

74. Working of Non-violence 197
75. No Apology 200
76. What to Do? 201
77. The Jewish Question 205
78. Withdrawn 207
79. The Oxford Group and Moral Rearmament (M. D.) .. 208
80. The War Resolution 210
81. The Impending Crisis 212
82. The Simla Visit 213
83. Source of My Sympathy 215
84. To the Brave Poles 217
85. Working Committee's Manifesto 218
86. A Polish Sister's Agony 225
87. Is India a Military Country? 226
88. Conundrums 228
89. India's Attitude 232
90. On Trial 235
91. A Poser 238
92. Hindu-Muslim Clashes 239
93. Unconditional Support? 240
94. The Hour of Trial (M. D.) 241
95. Sindh Riots 246
96. In God's Good Hands 247
97. Sindh Tragedy 251
98. Sindh Tragedy 254
99. A Pacifist's Doubts (M. D.) 256
100. Universal Conscription 257
101. The Question of Defence 258
102. More Calumny 258
103. My Advice to Noakhali Hindus 260
104. When the British Withdraw 262
105. Some Questions (A.K.) 263
106. Two Questions from America 264
107. Of What Avail is Non-violence? 266
108. Democracy and Non-violence 269
109. Panic 270
110. How to Combat Hitlerism 272
111. Both Happy and Unhappy 274

112. What to Do? 278
113. A Vital Question 279
114. To Every Briton 280
115. "A Cry in the Wilderness"? 283
116. The Delhi Resolution 286
117. Before the Gandhi Seva Sangh (M. D.) 288
118. The Correspondence 293
119. Unrepentant 294
120. Khansaheb's Ahimsa 297
121. The Best Field for Ahimsa 299
122. How to Cultivate Ahimsa? 300
123. A Flaw in Ahimsa 303
124. Not Quite So Bad 304
125. What of the 'Weak Majority'? 306
126. Is Non-violence Impossible? 308
127. The Live Issue (M. D.) 312
128. Moral Support 314
129. What Should a Briton Do and not Do? 317
130. Nazism in Its Nakedness 319
131. An Interesting Discourse—I (M. D.) 322
132. An Interesting Discourse—II (M. D.) 328
133. My Idea of a Police Force 331
134. Non-violence of the Brave 334
135. Sindh 336
136. Another Discourse (M. D.) 337
137. How to Quench It? 340
138. Congress Ahimsa 343
139. Non-violence during Riots 344
140. Speech at the A. I. C. C. 345
141. I was Unjust because Weak 354
142. Some Criticism Answered 356
143. Viceroy-Gandhi Correspondence 359
144. Sindh Hindus 362
145. A British Endorsement 364
146. Peace Organization 366
147. Real War Effort 368
148. A Deplorable Incident 371
149. "Suppose Germany Wins" 373

150. Plea for Calmness 375
151. Criminal Assaults 376
152. On Its Trial 380
153. Desirability of Exodus 383
154. Evacuation 385
155. Village Swaraj 386
156. 'Scorched Earth' 388
157. Scorched Earth 389
158. Inhuman if True 391
159. Question Box 394
160. Non-violent Resistance 397
161. To Every Briton 399
162. Two Actions 402
163. Letter to the Generalissimo 404
164. To Every Japanese 407
165. Fasting in Non-violent Action 411
166. To American Friends 413

APPENDICES

I. War against War—I (B. de Ligt) 416
II. War against War—II („) 421
III. 'Cat and Mouse' 428
IV. Non-violence the Only Way (R. B. Gregg) 433
V. We are Treated as Subhumans—We Are Asked to be Superhuman (H. Greenburg) 440
VI. Gandhiji Absolved 445
VII. What Led to the Decision (M. D.) 448
VIII. A. I. C. C. Resolution 458
IX. Seven Days in Bombay (M. D.) 460
X. More about the Resolution (M. D.) 474
XI. Creed v. Policy of Non-violence—K. N. Katju 480

1

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SWORD

I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Thus when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he should have run away and seen me killed or whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use, and defended me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence. Hence it was that I took part in the Boer War, the so-called Zulu Rebellion and the late War. Hence also do I advocate training in arms for those who believe in the method of violence. I would rather have India resort to arms in order to defend her honour than that she would, in a cowardly manner, become or remain a helpless witness to her own dishonour.

But I believe that non-violence is infinitely superior to violence, forgiveness is more manly than punishment. Forgiveness adorns a soldier. But abstinence is forgiveness only when there is the power to punish; it is meaningless when it pretends to proceed from a helpless creature. A mouse hardly forgives a cat when it allows itself to be torn to pieces by her. I therefore appreciate the sentiment of those who cry out for the condign punishment of General Dyer and his ilk. They would tear him to pieces, if they could. But I do not believe India to be helpless. I do not believe myself to be a helpless creature. Only I want to use India's and my strength for a better purpose.

Let me not be misunderstood. Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will. An average Zulu is any way more than a match for an average Englishman in bodily capacity. But he flees from an English boy, because he fears the boy's revolver or those who will use it for him. He fears death and is nerveless in spite of his burly figure. We in India may in a moment realize that one hundred thousand Englishmen need not frighten three hundred million human beings. A definite forgiveness would, therefore, mean a definite recognition of our strength. With enlightened forgive-

ness must come a mighty wave of strength in us, which would make it impossible for a Dyer and a Frank Johnson to heap affront on India's devoted head. It matters little to me that for the moment I do not drive my point home. We feel too down-trodden not to be angry and revengeful. But I must not refrain from saying that India can gain more by waiving the right of punishment. We have better work to do, a better mission to deliver to the world.

I am not a visionary. I claim to be a practical idealist. The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the *rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well. Non-violence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute. The spirit lies dormant in the brute, and he knows no law but that of physical might. The dignity of man requires obedience to a higher law—to the strength of the spirit.

I have therefore ventured to place before India the ancient law of self-sacrifice. For *satyagraha* and its offshoots, non-cooperation and civil resistance, are nothing but new names for the law of suffering. The *rishis*, who discovered the law of non-violence in the midst of violence, were greater geniuses than Newton. They were themselves greater warriors than Wellington. Having themselves known the use of arms, they realized their uselessness, and taught a weary world that its salvation lay not through violence but through non-violence.

Non-violence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means putting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being, it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire to save his honour, his religion, his soul, and lay the foundation for that empire's fall or its regeneration.

And so I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence because she is weak. I want her to practise non-violence being conscious of her strength and power. No training in arms is required for realization of her strength. We seem to need it, because we seem to think that we are but a lump of flesh. I want India to recognize that she has a soul that cannot perish and that can rise triumphant above every physical weakness and defy the physical combination of a whole world. What is the meaning of Rama, a mere human being, with his host of mon-

keys, pitting himself against the insolent strength of ten-headed Ravana surrounded in supposed safety by the raging waters on all sides of Lanka? Does it not mean the conquest of physical might by spiritual strength? However, being a practical man, I do not wait till India recognizes the practicability of the spiritual life in the political world. India considers herself to be powerless and paralysed before the machine-guns, the tanks and the aeroplanes of the English, and takes up non-cooperation out of her weakness. It must still serve the same purpose, namely, bring her delivery from the crushing weight of British injustice, if a sufficient number of people practise it.

I isolate this non-cooperation from Sinn Feinism, for it is so conceived as to be incapable of being offered side by side with violence. But I invite even the school of violence to give this peaceful non-cooperation a trial. It will not fail through its inherent weakness. It may fail because of poverty of response. Then will be the time for real danger. The high-souled men, who are unable to suffer national humiliation any longer, will want to vent their wrath. They will take to violence. So far as I know, they must perish without delivering themselves or their country from the wrong. If India takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain momentary victory. Then India will cease to be the pride of my heart. I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world. She is not to copy Europe blindly. India's acceptance of the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting. My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself. My life is dedicated to the service of India through the religion of non-violence which I believe to be the root of Hinduism.

Young India, 11-8-1920

2

ONE STEP ENOUGH FOR ME

Mr. Stokes is a Christian who wants to follow the light that God gives him. He has adopted India as his home. He is watching the non-cooperation movement from Kotagiri Hills where he is living in isolation from the India of the plains and is serving the hillmen. He has contributed three articles on non-cooperation to the columns of *The Servant* of Calcutta and other papers. I had the pleasure of reading them during my Bengal tour. Mr. Stokes approves of non-cooperation, but dreads the consequences that may follow complete success, i.e., evacuation of India by the British. He conjures up before his mind a picture of India invaded by the Afghans from the North-West, plundered by the Gurkhas from the Hills. For me I say with Cardinal Newman : 'I do not ask to see the distant scene ; one step enough for me.' The movement is essentially religious. The business of every god-fearing man is to dissociate himself from evil in total disregard of consequences. He must have faith in a good deed producing only a good result : that, in any opinion, is the Gita doctrine of work without attachment. God does not permit him to peep into the future. He follows truth although the following of it may endanger his very life. He knows that it is better to die in the way of God than to live in the way of Satan. Therefore, whoever is satisfied that this Government represents the activity of Satan has no choice left to him but to dissociate himself from it.

However, let us consider the worst that can happen to India on a sudden evacuation of India by the British. What does it matter that the Gurkhas and the Pathans attack us? Surely we would be better able to deal with their violence than we are with the continued violence, moral and physical, perpetrated by the present Government. Mr. Stokes does not seem to eschew the use of physical force. Surely the combined labour of the Rajput, the Sikh and the Mussalman warriors in a united India may be trusted to deal with plunderers from any or all the sides. Imagine, however, the worst : Japan overwhelming us from the Bay of Bengal, the Gurkhas from the Hills, and the Pathans from the North-West. If we do not succeed in driving them out, we make terms with them, and drive them out at the first opportu-

nity. This will be a more manly course than a helpless submission to an admittedly wrongful State.

But I refuse to contemplate the dismal outlook. If the movement succeeds through non-violent non-cooperation — and that is the supposition Mr. Stokes has started with — the English, whether they remain or retire, will do so as friends and under a well-ordered agreement as between partners. I still believe in the goodness of human nature, whether it is English or any other. I therefore do not believe that the English will leave in 'a night'.

And do I consider the Gurkha and the Afghan being incorrigible thieves and robbers without ability to respond to purifying influences ? I do not. If India returns to her spirituality, it will react upon the neighbouring tribes; she will interest herself in the welfare of these hardy but poor people, and even support them, if necessary, not out of fear but as a matter of neighbourly duty. She will have dealt with Japan simultaneously with the British. Japan will not want to invade India, if India has learnt to consider it a sin to use a single foreign article that she can manufacture within her own borders. She produces enough to eat, and her men and women can, without difficulty, manufacture enough cloth to cover their nakedness and protect themselves from heat and cold. We become prey to invasion, if we excite the greed of foreign nations by dealing with them under a feeling of dependence on them. We must learn to be independent of every one of them.

Whether, therefore, we finally succeed through violence or non-violence, in my opinion the prospect is by no means so gloomy as Mr. Stokes has imagined. Any conceivable prospect is, in my opinion, less black than the present unmanly and helpless condition. And we cannot do better than following out, fearlessly and with confidence, the open and honourable programme of non-violence and sacrifice that we have mapped for ourselves.

Young India, 29-12-1920

3

THE AFGHAN BOGEY

The reader will find elsewhere a string of questions put by a correspondent. The most important relates to a speech delivered by Maulana Mahomed Ali on the fear of an Afghan invasion. I have not read Maulana Mahomed Ali's speech referred to by the correspondent. But whether he does or not, I would, in a sense, certainly assist the Amir of Afghanistan, if he waged war against the British Government. That is to say, I would openly tell my countrymen that it would be a crime to help a Government which had lost the confidence of the nation to remain in power. On the other hand, I would not ask Indians to raise levies for the Amir. That would be against the creed of non-violence accepted by both Hindus and Muslims for the purpose of the Khilafat, the Punjab and Swaraj. And I apprehend that Maulana Mahomed Ali could not mean more in his speech than what I have suggested. He could not very well do otherwise, so long as the Hindu-Muslim compact subsists. The Muslims are free to dissolve the compact. But it would be found upon an examination of the case that the compact is indissoluble. Dissolution of the compact means destruction of India's purpose. I cannot conceive the present possibility of Hindus and Muslims entering upon a joint armed revolt. And Muslims can hardly expect to succeed with any plan of an armed revolt.

However, I warn the reader against believing in the bogey of an Afghan invasion. Their own military writers have often let us into the secret that many of the punitive expeditions were manufactured for giving the soldiers a training or keeping idle armed men occupied. A weak, disarmed, helpless, credulous India does not know how this Government has kept her under its hypnotic spell. Even some of the best of us today really believe that the military budget is being piled up for protecting India against foreign aggression. I suggest that it is being piled up for want of faith in the Sikhs, the Gurkhas, the Pathans and the Rajputs, i.e., for want of faith in us and for the purpose of keeping us under forced subjection. My belief (I write under correction) is that the anxiety of the Government always to have a treaty with the Amir was based, not so much upon the fear of a Russian invasion as upon the fear of losing the confi-

dence of the Indian soldiery. Today there is certainly no fear of a Russian invasion. I have never believed in the Bolshevik menace. And why should any Indian Government, to use the favourite phrase of the erstwhile idol of Bengal, "broad-based upon a people's affection", fear Russia, Bolshevik or any menace? Surely a contented and powerful India (all the more), in alliance with Great Britain, can any day meet any invasion upon her. But this Government has deliberately emasculated us, kept us under the perpetual fear of our neighbours and the whole world, and drained India of her splendid resources, so that she has lost faith in herself either for defence or for dealing with the simple problem of the growing poverty. I therefore do certainly hope that the Amir will not enter into any treaty with this Government. Any such treaty can only mean unholy bargain against Islam and India. This Government being unwilling to part with O'Dwyerism as an 'emergency' measure, being unwilling to keep its faith with the Muslims (I must decline to treat the Government of India separately from the Imperial Government), and being unwilling to let India rise to her full height, wants Afghanistan to enter into a treaty of offence against India. I hope that there is but one opinion so far as non-cooperators are concerned. Whilst unwilling ourselves, we cannot wish others to cooperate with the Government.

Young India, 4-5-1921

4

OUR NEIGHBOURS

Is not my article on 'The Afghan Bogey' an invitation to the Afghans to invade the Indian border, and thus do I not become a direct party to violence? Thus asks Mr. Andrews. My article was written for Indians and for the Government. I do not believe the Afghans to be so foolish as to invade India on the strength of my article. But I see that it is capable of bearing the interpretation put upon it by Mr. Andrews. I therefore hasten to inform all whom it may concern that not only do I not want to invite the Afghans or anybody to come to our assistance, but am anxious for them not to come to our assistance. I am quite confident of India's ability to settle with the Government without extraneous help. Moreover, I am interested in demonstrating the perfect possibility of attaining our end only by non-violent means. I would therefore strain every nerve to keep the Afghans out of the Indian border. But my anxiety to keep them off the Indian border will not go so far as to assist the Government with men or money.

In my article I have put my position as clearly as possible. For me the existing Government is the most intolerable of all, it is the greatest danger to the manhood of India, and I would welcome its re-formation at any cost. It is my settled conviction that it is a godless Government. That there are good Englishmen and good Indians connected with it makes it all the more dangerous for India. It keeps the nation's eyes off the inherent evil of it. My attack is not against individuals, it is directed against the system, against the aggregate called the Government. The best of Viceroys have been powerless to eradicate the poison of the system. The poison is its foundation. Therefore I can reconcile myself to all the worst that can happen to India in the place of the present system.

What, however, I would do is totally different from what I can do. I am sorry to have to confess that the movement has not yet acquired such hold on the soldier class as to embolden them to refuse assistance to the Government in time of need. When the soldier class has realized that they live for the nation, and that it is a travesty of a soldier's calling when he under-

takes to kill to order, the battle of India's worldly freedom is won. As it is, the Indian soldier is as much subject to fear as the layman. He fills the recruiting ranks because he believes that there is no other means of livelihood. The Government has made the profession of killing attractive by a system of special rewards, and by a system of skilfully devised punishments has made it well-nigh impossible for the soldier, once he is in, to get out without difficulty. In these circumstances I do not delude myself with the belief that the British Government will be without Indian help in the event of an immediate Afghan invasion. But it was my duty, especially when challenged, to put before the nation the position logically arising from non-cooperation. It was necessary, too, to warn the nation against being frightened by the Afghan bogey.

The second part of the question contains, in my opinion, a misconception of non-violence. It is no part of the duty of a non-violent non-cooperator to assist the Government against war made upon it by others. A non-violent non-cooperator may not secretly or openly encourage or assist any such war. He may not take part directly or indirectly in it. But it is no part of his duty to help the Government to end the war. On the contrary, his prayer would be, as it must be, for the defeat of a power which he seeks to destroy. I therefore, so far as my creed of non-violence is concerned, can contemplate an Afghan invasion with perfect equanimity, and equally so far as India's safety is concerned. The Afghans have no quarrel with India. They are a god-fearing people. I warn non-cooperators against judging the Afghans by the few savage specimens we see in Bombay or Calcutta. It is a superstition to suppose that they will overrun India if the British post at the frontier is withdrawn. Let us remember that there is nothing to prevent them from overrunning India today, if they wished to. But they are as fond of their country as we claim to be fond of ours. I must devote a separate article to an examination of the difficult problem that faces the residents near the Frontier.

Young India, 18-5-1921

5

THE FRONTIER FRIENDS

The Punjabis living on the Frontier deserve the sympathy of the whole of India. They are exposed to attacks from the neighbouring tribes, they are defenceless, and, from all the accounts received by me, the Government seem to give them little or no protection, and nowadays the rule for the officers, if anyone complains, is to refer the complainant to the Ali Brothers and to me. If we had charge of Frontier, I know what we would have done. We would certainly have died in the attempt to defend the unarmed population of the districts. We would have, if necessary, armed the population for self-defence. But what is more, we would have won over the tribesmen and turned them from marauding bands into trustworthy neighbours. But we have to take things as they are. I assume that the Hindus and the Mussalmans are friendly to one another, and that no Mussalman traitorously helps the tribesmen against his Hindu brother. The Mussalman population this side of the Frontier is in an exceptionally strong position to help.

We must not despair of the tribesmen. We have too often considered them to be hopeless. In my opinion they are amenable to reason. They are god-fearing. They do not loot merely for pleasure. I believe that they are themselves coming under the influence of the wave of self-purification that is spreading.

I know that the process of reforming the tribesmen is slow and tedious. It provides poor comfort to those that are robbed of their possessions or their dear ones.

The difficulty is to be traced to the same cause. We fear Englishmen, and we have become slaves. We fear the tribesmen, and we are satisfied with our slavery; we are thankful that we are protected by the former against the latter. I cannot imagine greater humiliation for a self-respecting man to be dependent, for the safety of himself or his family, on those who he thinks prey upon him. I would prefer total destruction of myself and my all to purchasing safety at the cost of my manhood. This feeling of helplessness in us has really arisen from our deliberate dismissal of God from our common affairs. We have become atheists for all practical purposes. And therefore

we believe that in the long run we must rely upon physical force for our protection. In the face of physical danger we cast all our philosophy to the winds. Our daily life is a negation of God. If then we would but have a little trust in God, i.e. ourselves, we shall find no difficulty with the tribesmen. Only in that case we will have to be prepared at times to surrender our possessions and under certain circumstances our lives rather than our honour. We must refuse to believe that our neighbours are savages incapable of responding to the finer in man.

Thus consistently with our self-respect there are but two courses open to us, to prepare, in so far as we wish to defend ourselves, however weakly, against robbery and plunder, or to believe in the capacity of our neighbours to respond to the nobler instinct in man and to endeavour to reform the tribesmen. I apprehend that the two processes will go hand in hand. We must avoid the third at any cost, i.e. reliance in the British bullet to protect us from harm. It is the surest way to national suicide.

If my writings can reach the tribesmen, I would certainly urge them to leave their predatory habits. Inasmuch as they loot a single man or woman, they belie the teaching of the Prophet whose name they prize above all others and whom they believe to be the messenger of the God of mercy and justice. It is the duty of every Mussalman and Ulema who has any influence with these simple men to tell them that, if they will play their part in defending Islam from impending danger, the least they can do is to refrain from molesting their neighbours, who have done not only no harm to them but who, whether they are Hindus or Mussalmans, are doing their best to safeguard the honour of Islam.

Young India, 25-5-1921

6

THE AFGHAN ALARM

It must be a matter of surprise to many people, as it is to me, that Shri Bipin Chandra Pal should be alarmed at the Afghan cry raised in interested quarters. He is a believer in full Swaraj, and I venture to suggest to him that we cannot establish Swaraj in India till we rid ourselves of the feeling of helplessness. Swaraj means our preparedness to deal with the Afghan and every other menace in our country. The whole scheme of non-cooperation is based on trusting other people and if they prove untrustworthy, on our being prepared to meet their deceit by self-suffering. I remind Shri Pal of what he truly said at Allahabad at the Hindu-Muslim Conference in reply to Dr. Sapru, that the same power of combination, resourcefulness and suffering that would end the present system of slavery, would enable us to deal with every other system of a similar nature.

Pan-Islamism, which Shri Pal fears, is an admirable doctrine in so far as a Mussalman wishes the solidarity of all Muslim States. It would be a dangerous doctrine, if it were to mean a combination of Islamic powers for the purpose of exploiting the world or converting it to Islam by force. No sane Mussalman of my acquaintance has ever entertained the latter idea. The world is growing sick of the domination of brute force.

I assure Shri Pal that I do not believe in flirtation with any sentiment. I reject those that are bad, and hug those that are good. I do not believe that serious Mussalmans will welcome Afghan rule any more than serious Hindus would. In writing my article on the Afghan Bogey, I was minded only to defend the correct position of a comrade, and to warn India against being frightened by the interested cry.

I totally dissent from Shri Pal's view that the event of an Afghan invasion, or even the mere circulation of a rumour of such invasion, will incite a very large part of our Muslim population to lawlessness, if not to open 'revolt'. On the contrary, it is my firm belief that the Mussalmans have too much at stake today—the honour of their religion—to do any such foolish act. As Maulana Shaukat Ali has said so often, the Mussalmans are

too shrewd to mix up violence with non-violence. Shri Pal has done a grave injustice to the Hindus by attributing to 'a very large proportion' of Hindus 'a desire to settle their own account with the Mussalmans'. He has, I venture to assure him, entirely misread the Hindu mind. The Hindus are as much in earnest about the cow, as the Mussalmans about the Khilafat. And the former know that they cannot save the cow—the cherished dream of every Hindu—without the goodwill of the latter. I promise that the Hindus will forget every wrong done in the past by every Mussalman when the latter help them to save the cow, as I know every Mussalman will feel eternally grateful to the Hindus, if he finds that he has retrieved the honour of Islam by their voluntary aid.

I deny *in toto* the truth of the proposition laid down by Shri Pal that Muslims and Hindus would welcome an Afghan invasion. The protests that have been made against the supposed intentions of Maulana Mahomed Ali are surely enough to convince anybody that India will not tolerate an Afghan invasion.

Shri Pal suggests that, if the Amir invades and if we do not aid the Government, there can only be a revolution. I venture to suggest another alternative. If India as a non-cooperating India does not assist, the Government will make terms with the people. I do not consider the British people to be so utterly devoid of commonsense or resourcefulness as to leave India rather than come to terms with her and heal the Khilafat and the Punjab wounds. That India does not yet possess the power to command attention, I know only too well. I have simply suggested a contingent alternative.

Shri Pal sees a difference between Lalaji's and my declaration at Simla and our previous declarations. I know none—neither Lalaji nor I—has ever welcomed an Afghan invasion. But I gladly lay down my own position in categorical terms:—

1. I do not believe that the Afghans want to invade India.

2. I believe that the Government is fully prepared to meet an Afghan invasion.

3. I am sorry to confess that, if there were an Afghan invasion, every Raja and Maharaja would render unconditional assistance to the Government.

4. I believe too that we as a people are still so demoralized, diffident, and distrustful of Afghan intentions, and Hindus and Mussalmans of one another, that many would, in mere panic, rush to the help of the Government, and thus still further strengthen the chain that binds India.

5. In theory, it is possible to distinguish between an invasion of India and an invasion of the British Government for the purpose of the Khilafat. In practice, I do not believe in the Afghans invading India to embarrass the Government, and being able, in the event of being successful, to resist the temptation of establishing a kingdom in India.

6. In spite of such belief, I hold it to be contrary to the faith of a non-cooperator to render unconditional assistance to a Government which he seeks to end or mend.

7. A handful of conscientious objectors may make no impression on the then current of events, but they will sow the seed for raising a manly India.

8. I would rather see India perish at the hands of Afghans than purchase freedom from Afghan invasion at the cost of her honour. To have India defended by an unrepentant Government that keeps the Khilafat and the Punjab wounds still bleeding, is to sell India's honour.

9. My faith, however, in the British nation is such that, when we have shown sufficient strength of purpose and undergone enough measure of self-sacrifice, the British people will respond fully. My reading of history is that they do not yield to justice pure and simple. It is too abstract for their 'commonsense'. But they are far-seeing enough to respond to justice when it is allied with force. Whether it is brute force or soul force they do not mind.

10. It is the duty of every non-cooperator to let the Afghan know that he believes in the capacity of non-cooperation to restore the Khilafat to the pre-war status, and that India does not want their armed intervention, that non-cooperators would appreciate their refusal to enter into any deal with the British Government for holding India in subjection, and that India has none but the friendliest feelings for her neighbours.

Young India, 1-6-1921

7

FOREIGN POLICY

The draft resolution on foreign policy approved and circulated by the Working Committee has created a mild sensation. That some people are surprised at the Working Committee seriously discussing the question shows that in their opinion India is not ripe for Swaraj. I have endeavoured to show before now that everybody and every nation is always ripe for Swaraj, or to put it another way, no nation needs to undergo tutelage at the hands of another. Indeed, whilst we are maturing our plans for establishing Swaraj, we are bound to consider and define our foreign policy. Surely we are bound authoritatively to tell the world what relations we wish to cultivate with it. If we do not fear our neighbours, or if although feeling strong we have no designs upon them, we must say so. We are equally bound to tell the world whether we want to send our sepoys to the battle-fields of France or Mesopotamia. We must not be afraid to speak our minds on all that concerns the nation.

A correspondent from Ludhiana has sent me a string of questions, showing how the public mind is agitated. I give them below with my answers.

1. Shall India's foreign policy be governed by any other consideration but that of its population?

Naturally the interest of India must be given preference over all others.

2. Should Indian men or money be used for fighting the battle of England etc. ?

Yes, if India has entered into treaty obligations to fight for other nations.

3. Shall the law of the land be subordinate to the special interest of any sect, league or society?

Certainly not. But the law may be such as to provide assistance to friendly neighbours, as we would, if we were free today, be assisting the Turks with men and money to the best of our ability.

4. Should any Government be made a tool for the protection of any religion, race or class ?

The Swaraj Government to be worth the name will certainly protect the religions professed in India and the races domiciled in India.

5. How are the things to be settled when Shastra or Shariat says one thing and the country's need is against it?

The question is really irrelevant. The need of one sect or the religion professed by it must be the need of the country.

6. Should the relations between the zamindars and the ryots be based on mutiny?

I hope they never will be so based under Swaraj, but then they will be happy and mutually beneficial.

7. Should loyalty to one's motherland be conditional, and if so how?

Loyalty to the country is always subordinate to loyalty to God.

Young India, 20-10-1921

8

SOLDIERS

The prosecution of the Brothers and their companions and the manifesto have reached the barracks, and soldiers are inquiring how they can support themselves if they leave. One correspondent asks on their behalf as to what would happen to them under Swaraj. As for the first, the Working Committee has shown them the way. Every soldier can easily become a weaver and carder. Carding requires strength of arm which every soldier must have. And a carder in Bombay earns anything between two to three rupees per day. Many weavers of the Punjab have left the handloom for the sword of the hireling. I consider the former to be infinitely preferable to the latter. I refuse to call the profession of the sepoy honourable when he has no choice as to the time when and the persons or people against whom he is called upon to use his sword. The sepoy's services have more often been utilized for enslaving us than for protecting us, whereas the weaver today can truly become the liberator of his country and hence a true soldier.

A friend has suggested that agriculture should also be added to weaving and carding advised by the Congress. It cannot be as an immediate measure, because agriculture cannot be taken up with ease, and it requires a capital outlay which renders it impracticable for our purpose.

What will happen during Swaraj is easily answered. The soldiers will not then be hirelings, but they will form the national militia for defensive and protective purposes alone. They will have a voice in the moulding of the affairs of the nation. And they will certainly never be sent to cut down inoffensive Turks or Arabs in the West or equally inoffensive Chinese or Burmese in the East.

Young India, 27-10-1921

9

HINDUS IN AFGHANISTAN

To the Editor, *Young India*.

Sir,

If an insignificant Indian, who does not believe in the attainment of Swaraj by non-cooperation and who thinks that the Khilafat agitation is strengthening the hands of those who, in their heart of hearts, are preparing for the restoration of Muslim rule, far more despotic and iniquitous than the present "Satanic" Government, if such an Indian, who loves his country in his own way, deserves any attention, then may I make the following enquiry?

I read in Bellow's *Journal of a Political Mission to Afghanistan* that the Hindkis, i.e., Hindus of Afghanistan were subject to many indignities and iniquitous disabilities; for example, they had to pay the "jaziya", they must wear a distinctive dress, they must not ride a horse upon a saddle, etc. These things were, of course, sanctioned by the Muslim Government of Afghanistan. I am not aware of any change for the better since. You have many friends, Khilafatwalas, who have openly declared in favour of an Afghan invasion of India; will you inform the Hindus, if the legal disabilities of the Hindus of Afghanistan have been removed? If not, should you not plead

for their removal as strongly as you are doing in the case of the so-called "slave-like" treatment of Indians by the "Satanic" Government? The race to which this "Satanic" Government belongs never treated Indians so unfairly as the Muslim rulers of Afghanistan did the Hindus.

I believe that you are doing greater good by your strong attitude regarding untouchability than by your support of the Khilafat. If you can remove untouchability and the provincial differences among Hindus, you will become one of the greatest benefactors of humanity. The Muslims are strong enough to take care of themselves.

Ratanganj — I am, etc.
24-10-1921 — R. C. BANERJEE

[I do not know anything about the treatment of Hindus in Afghanistan, but I am prepared for the moment to assume the truth of the statement referred to by the correspondent. It would be relevant, if we were trying to introduce Afghan rule in India. I am only concerned with the present misrule in India, which, if it permits me to ride a horse, has reduced me to serfdom in my own country. Nor can I be deterred from overthrowing the present misrule for fear of Afghan or other Muslim rule creeping in. The correspondent will find that when we have attained Swaraj we shall have attained the ability to resist any other misrule. We shall have learnt, without the necessity of training at Sandhurst, the art of dying for country and religion. M. K. G.]

Young India, 3-11-1921

10

MY PART IN THE WAR

On arrival in England I learned that Gokhale had been stranded in Paris where he had gone for reasons of health, and as communication between Paris and London had been cut off, there was no knowing when he would return. I did not want to go home without having seen him, but no one could say definitely when he would arrive.

What then was I to do in the meanwhile? What was my duty as regards the war? Sorabji Adajania, my comrade in jail and a satyagrahi, was then reading for the bar in London. As one of the best satyagrahis he had been sent to England to qualify himself as a barrister, so that he might take my place on return to South Africa. Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta was paying his expenses. With him, and through him, I had conferences with Dr. Jivraj Mehta and others who were prosecuting their studies in England. In consultation with them a meeting of the Indian residents in Great Britain and Ireland was called. I placed my views before them.

I felt that Indians residing in England ought to do their bit in the war. English students had volunteered to serve in the army, and Indians might do no less. A number of objections were taken to this line of argument. There was, it was contended, a world of difference between the Indians and the English. We were slaves and they were masters. How could a slave co-operate with a master in the hour of the latter's need? Was it not the duty of the slave, seeking to be free, to make the master's need his opportunity? This argument failed to appeal to me then. I knew the difference of status between an Indian and an Englishman, but I did not believe that we have been quite reduced to slavery. I felt then that it was more the fault of individual British officials than of the British system, and that we could convert them by love. If we would improve our status through the help and co-operation of the British, it was our duty to win their help by standing by them in their hour of need. Though the system was faulty, it did not seem to me to be intolerable, as it does today. But if, having lost my faith in the system, I refuse to co-operate with the British Government today, how

could those friends then do so, having lost their faith not only in the system but in the officials as well?

The opposing friends felt that that was the hour for making a bold declaration of Indian demands and for improving the status of Indians.

I thought that England's need should not be turned into our opportunity, and that it was more becoming and far-sighted not to press our demands while the war lasted. I therefore adhered to my advice and invited those who would to enlist as volunteers. There was a good response, practically all the provinces and all the religions being represented among the volunteers.

I wrote a letter to Lord Crewe, acquainting him with these facts, and expressing our readiness to be trained for ambulance work, if that should be considered a condition precedent to the acceptance of our offer.

Lord Crewe accepted the offer after some hesitation, and thanked us for having tendered our services to the Empire at that critical hour.

The volunteers began their preliminary training in first aid to the wounded under the well-known Dr. Cantlie. It was a short course of six weeks, but it covered the whole course of first aid.

We were a class of about 80. In six weeks we were examined, and all except one passed. For these the Government now provided military drill and other training. Colonel Baker was placed in the charge of this work.

London in these days was a sight worth seeing. There was no panic, but all were busy helping to the best of their ability. Able-bodied adults began training as combatants, but what were the old, the infirm and the women to do? There was enough work for them, if they wanted. So they employed themselves in cutting and making clothes and dressings for the wounded.

The Lyceum, a ladies' club, undertook to make as many clothes for the soldiers as they could. Shrimati Sarojini Naidu was a member of this club, and threw herself wholeheartedly into the work. This was my first acquaintance with her. She placed before me a heap of clothes which had been cut to pattern, and asked me to get them all sewn up and return them to her.

I welcomed her demand, and with the assistance of friends got as many clothes made as I could manage during my training for first aid.

(*Autobiography*, Part IV, Chap. 38)

11

WHY DID I ASSIST IN THE LAST WAR ?

A correspondent asks some pertinent questions in the following pungent fashion:

"When the Zulus broke out for liberty against the British usurpers, you helped the British in suppressing the so-called rebellion. Is it a rebellion to try to shake off the foreign yoke? Was Jean D'arc a rebel? Was George Washington a rebel? Is De Valera one? You may say that the Zulus had recourse to violence. I then ask, was the end bad or the means? The latter may have been so, but certainly not the former; so you will be kind enough to explain the riddle. In the last war, when the gallant Germans and Austrians were fighting so bravely against a world combination, you raised recruits for the British to fight against the nations that had done India no harm. Whenever there is a war between two races, one has to hear both parties before coming to a decision either for or against any of them. In the last war we had a one-sided version only, and that from a nation certainly not renowned for truthfulness or honesty. You have all along been an advocate of passive resistance and non-violence. Why then did you induce people to take part in a war the merits of which they knew not, and for the aggrandisement of a race so miserably wallowing in the mire of imperialism? You may say you had faith in the British bureaucracy. Is it possible for any person to have faith in an alien people, all whose acts have run so glaringly counter to their promises? It cannot have been so with a person of such high attainments as yourself. So you will please answer the second riddle.

"There is another point to which I should like to refer. You are an advocate of non-violence. Under the present circumstances we should be strictly non-violent. But when India will be free, should we strictly eschew arms even if a foreign nation invaded us? Would you also boycott railways and telegraphs and steamers even when they will have ceased to promote exports of the products of our soil?"

I hear and read many charges of inconsistency about myself. But I do not answer them as they do not affect anyone

but myself. The questions, however, raised by the correspondent are of general importance and deserve notice. They are by no means new to me. But I do not remember having answered them in the columns of *Young India*.

Not only did I offer my services at the time of the Zulu Revolt but before that, at the time of the Boer War, and not only did I raise recruits in India during the late war, but I raised an ambulance corps in 1914 in London. If, therefore, I have sinned, the cup of my sins is full to the brim. I lost no occasion of serving the Government at all times. Two questions presented themselves to me during all those crises. What was my duty as a citizen of the empire as I then believed myself to be, and what was my duty as an out-and-out believer in the religion of *ahimsa*—non-violence?

I know now that I was wrong in thinking that I was a citizen of the empire. But on those four occasions I did honestly believe that, in spite of the many disabilities that my country was labouring under, it was making its way towards freedom, and that on the whole the government from the popular standpoint was not wholly bad, and that the British administrators were honest though insular and dense. Holding that view, I set about doing what an ordinary Englishman would do in the circumstances. I was not wise or important enough to take independent action. I had no business to judge or scrutinize ministerial decisions with the solemnity of a tribunal. I did not impute malice to the ministers either at the time of the Boer War, the Zulu Revolt or the late war. I did not consider Englishmen, nor do I now consider them, as particularly bad or worse than other human beings. I considered and still consider them to be as capable of high motives and actions as any other body of men, and equally capable of making mistakes. I therefore felt that I sufficiently discharged my duty as a man and a citizen by offering my humble services to the empire in the hour of its need whether local or general. That is how I would expect every Indian to act by his country under Swaraj. I should be deeply distressed, if on every conceivable occasion every one of us were to be a law unto oneself and to scrutinize in golden scales every action of our future National Assembly. I would surrender my judgment in most matters to national representatives, taking particular care in making my choice of

such representatives. I know that in no other manner would a democratic government be possible for one single day.

The whole situation is now changed for me. My eyes, I fancy, are opened. Experience has made me wiser. I consider the existing system of government to be wholly bad and requiring special national effort to end or mend it. It does not possess within itself any capacity for self-improvement. That I still believe many English administrators to be honest does not assist me, because I consider them to be as blind and deluded as I was myself. Therefore I can take no pride in calling the empire mine or describing myself as a citizen. On the contrary, I fully realize that I am a *pariah* untouchable of the empire. I must, therefore, constantly pray for its radical reconstruction or total destruction, even as a Hindu *pariah* would be fully justified in so praying about Hinduism or Hindu society.

The next point, that of *ahimsa*, is more abstruse. My conception of *ahimsa* impels me always to dissociate myself from almost every one of the activities I am engaged in. My soul refuses to be satisfied so long as it is a helpless witness of a single wrong or a single misery. But it is not possible for me — a weak, frail, miserable being — to mend every wrong or to hold myself free of blame for all the wrong I see. The spirit in me pulls one way, the flesh in me pulls in the opposite direction. There is freedom from the action of these two forces, but that freedom is attainable only by slow and painful stages. I can attain freedom not by a mechanical refusal to act, but only by intelligent action in a detached manner. This struggle resolves itself into an incessant crucifixion of the flesh so that the spirit may become entirely free.

I was, again, an ordinary citizen no wiser than my fellows, myself believing in *ahimsa* and the rest not believing in it at all but refusing to do their duty of assisting the Government because they were actuated by anger and malice. They were refusing out of their ignorance and weakness. As a fellow worker it became my duty to guide them aright. I therefore placed before them their clear duty, explained the doctrine of *ahimsa* to them, and let them make their choice, which they did. I do not repent of my action in terms of *ahimsa*. For, under Swaraj too I would not hesitate to advise those who would bear arms to do so and fight for the country.

That brings to me the second question. Under Swaraj of my dream there is no necessity for arms at all. But I do not expect that dream to materialize in its fulness as a result of the present effort, first because the effort is not directed to that end as an immediate goal, and secondly because I do not consider myself advanced enough to be able to prescribe a detailed course of conduct to the nation for such preparation. I am still myself too full of passion and other frailties of human nature to feel the call or the capacity. All I claim for myself is that I am incessantly trying to overcome every one of my weaknesses. I have attained great capacity, I believe, for suppressing and curbing my senses, but I have not become incapable of sin, i.e., of being acted upon by my senses. I believe it to be possible for every human being to attain that blessed and indescribable sinless state in which he feels within himself the presence of God to the exclusion of everything else. It is, I must confess, as yet a distant scene. And therefore it is not possible for me to show the nation a present way to complete non-violence in practice.

Young India, 17-11-1921

12

HOW THE HOPE WAS SHATTERED*

My public life began in 1893 in South Africa in troubled weather. My first contact with British authorities in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that as a man and an Indian I had no rights. More correctly, I discovered that I had no rights as a man because I was an Indian.

But I was not baffled. I thought that this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsically and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and hearty co-operation, criticizing it freely where I felt it was faulty but never wishing its destruction.

Consequently when the existence of the Empire was threatened in 1899 by the Boer challenge, I offered my services to it,

* From the statement made by Gandhiji before the court at his trial on 18-3-1922.

raised a voluntary ambulance corps, and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Ladysmith. Similarly in 1906 at the time of the Zulu Revolt I raised a stretcher-bearer party and served till the end of the 'rebellion'. On both these occasions I received medals and was even mentioned in despatches. For my work in South Africa I was given by Lord Hardinge a Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal. When the war broke out in 1914 between England and Germany, I raised a volunteer ambulance corps in London, consisting of the then resident Indians in London, chiefly students. Its work was acknowledged by the authorities to be valuable. Lastly, in India when a special appeal was made at the War Conference in Delhi in 1918 by Lord Chelmsford for recruits, I struggled, at the cost of my health, to raise a corps in Kheda, and the response was being made when the hostilities ceased and orders were received that no more recruits were wanted. In all these efforts at service I was actuated by the belief that it is possible by such services to gain a status of full equality in the Empire for my countrymen.

The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act, a law designed to rob the people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Mussalmans of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled. But, in spite of the forebodings and the grave warnings of friends, at the Amritsar Congress in 1919 I fought for co-operation and working the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, hoping that the Prime Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Mussalmans, that the Punjab wound would be healed, and that the reforms, inadequate and unsatisfactory though they were, marked a new era of hope in the life of India.

But all that hope was shattered. The Khilafat promise was not to be redeemed. The Punjab crime was whitewashed, and most culprits went not only unpunished but remained in service and some continued to draw pensions from the Indian revenue, and in some cases were even rewarded. I saw too that not only

did the reforms not mark a change of heart, but they were only a method of further draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude.

Young India, 23-3-1922

13

MY PATH

It is my good fortune and misfortune to receive attention in Europe and America at the present moment. It is my good fortune in that my message is being studied and understood in the West. It is my misfortune in that it is also being either unconsciously exaggerated or wilfully distorted. Every truth is self-acting and possesses inherent strength. I therefore remain unperturbed even when I find myself grossly misrepresented. A kind European friend has sent me a warning which shows, if the information given to him be true, that I am being either wilfully or accidentally misunderstood in Russia. Here is the message:

> "The Russian representative at Berlin, M. Krestinsky, would be asked by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to give an official welcome to Gandhi (?) and to 'profit by the situation to undertake Bolshevik propagandist activities among his followers'. Besides, Krestinsky would be given the task of inviting Gandhi to come to Russia. He is authorized to give a subsidy for the publication of propagandist literature among the oppressed peoples of Asia; and he is to found, for the purposes of the Oriental Club and Secretariate, a purse in the name of Gandhi, for students who are of his ideas (of the ideas of Gandhi or of those of Moscow?). Finally three Hindus would be enlisted in this work. All this is published in the Russian newspapers like the *Rul* of Oct. 18th."

The message gives the clue to the reports that I was likely to be invited to visit Germany and Russia. I need not say that I have received no such invitation at all, nor have I the slightest desire to visit these great countries. I am conscious of the fact that the truth for which I stand has not yet been fully accepted by India. It has not yet been fully vindicated. My work in India is still in the experimental stage. In such circumstances any foreign adventure on my part would be altogether

premature. I should be fully satisfied if the experiment demonstrably succeeds in India.

My path is clear. Any attempt to use me for violent purposes is bound to fail. I have no secret methods. I know no diplomacy save that of Truth. I have no weapon but non-violence. I may be unconsciously led astray for a while but not for all time. I have therefore well-defined limitations, within which alone I may be used. Attempts have been made before now to use me unlawfully more than once. They have failed each time so far as I am aware.

I am yet ignorant of what exactly Bolshevism is. I have not been able to study it. I do not know whether it is for the good of Russia in the long run. But I do know that in so far as it is based on violence and denial of God, it repels me. I do not believe in short—violent—cuts to success. Those Bolshevik friends who are bestowing their attention on me should realize that, however much I may sympathize with and admire worthy motives, I am an uncompromising opponent of violent methods even to serve the noblest of causes. There is, therefore, really no meeting ground between the school of violence and myself. But my creed of non-violence not only does not preclude me but compels me even to associate with anarchists and all those who believe in violence. But that association is always with the sole object of weaning them from what appears to me to be their error. For experience convinces me that permanent good can never be the outcome of untruth and violence. Even if my belief is a fond delusion, it will be admitted that it is a fascinating delusion.

Young India, 11-12-1924

14

UNDER SWARAJ

> "In your Swaraj is there any place for soldiers? Will your Swaraj Government keep armies? If so, will they fight — I mean use physical force — when necessary, or will they offer satyagraha against their opponents?"

Alas! In my Swaraj of today there is room for soldiers. Let the revolutionary friend know that I have described the disarmament and consequent emasculation of a whole people as the blackest crime of the British. I have not the capacity for preaching universal non-violence to the country. I preach, therefore, non-violence restricted strictly to the purpose of winning our freedom and therefore perhaps for preaching the regulation of international relations by non-violent means. But my incapacity must not be mistaken for that of the doctrine of non-violence. I see it with my intellect in all its effulgence. My heart grasps it. But I have not yet the attainments of preaching universal non-violence with effect. I am not advanced enough for the great task. I have yet anger within me, I have yet the *dwaitabhava* — duality — in me. I can regulate my passions, I keep them under subjection, but before I can preach universal non-violence with effect, I must be wholly free from passions. I must be wholly incapable of sin. Let the revolutionary pray with and for me that I may soon become that. But meanwhile let him take with me the one step to it which I see as clearly as daylight, i.e. to win India's freedom with strictly non-violent means. And then under Swaraj you and I shall have a disciplined intelligent educated police force that would keep order within and fight raiders from without, if by that time I or someone else does not show a better way of dealing with either.

Young India, 7-5-1925

WHAT OF THE WEST ?

A European friend thus writes:—

"What can be done, what would you suggest that could be tried, in favour of the starving millions of the West? By starving millions I mean the masses of the European and American proletariat who are being driven to the abyss, who live a life not worth the name, full of the direst privations, who can nourish no dream of future relief by any form of Swaraj, who are perhaps more hopeless than the millions of India, because the faith in God, the consolation of religion, has left them to be replaced by nothing but hatred.

"The iron hands which press down the Indian nation are at work there also. The devilish system is at work in each of these masses who naturally try to escape the hell of their life at any cost, at the cost of making it a greater hell, and who have no longer the outlet of religious hopes, as Christianity by siding for centuries with the powerful and the greedy has lost all credit.

"Of course I expect Mahatmaji to answer that the only way to salvation for these masses, if there is any left, if the whole Western world is not already doomed, lies in the application of a disciplined non-violent resistance carried on, on a large scale. But there are no traditions of *ahimsa* in the European soil and mind. Even the spreading of the doctrine would encounter huge difficulties, what about its right understanding and application!"

The problem underlying the question so sincerely put by the friend lies outside my orbit. I therefore attempt an answer merely in courteous recognition of friendship between the questioner and myself. I confess that no value attaches to my answer, save what we attach to every considered argument. I know neither the diagnosis of the European disease nor the remedy in the same sense that I claim to know both in the case of India.

I, however, feel that fundamentally the disease is the same in Europe as it is in India, in spite of the fact that in the former country the people enjoy political self-government. No mere transference of political power in India will satisfy my ambition, even though I hold such transference to be a vital necessity of Indian national life. The peoples of Europe have no doubt

political power, but no Swaraj. Asian and African races are exploited for their partial benefit, and they, on their part, are being exploited by the ruling class or caste under the sacred name of democracy. At the root, therefore, the disease appears to be the same as in India. The same remedy is, therefore, likely to be applicable. Shorn of all the camouflage, the exploitation of the masses of Europe is sustained by violence.

Violence on the part of the masses will never remove the disease. Anyway, up to now experience shows that success of violence has been short-lived. It has led to greater violence. What has been tried hitherto has been a variety of violence and artificial checks dependent mainly upon the will of the violent. At the crucial moment these checks have naturally broken down. It seems to me, therefore, that sooner or later the European masses will have to take to non-violence, if they are to find their deliverance. That there is no hope of their taking to it in a body and at once does not baffle me. A few thousand years are but a speck in the vast time circle. Someone has to make a beginning with a faith that will not flinch. I doubt not that the masses, even of Europe, will respond, but what is more emergent in point of time is not so much a large experiment in non-violence as a precise grasp of the meaning of deliverance.

From what will the masses be delivered? It will not do to have a vague generalization and to answer: 'from exploitation and degradation'. Is not the answer this that they want to occupy the status that capital does today? If so, it can be attained only by violence. But if they want to shun the evils of capital, in other words, if they would revise the viewpoint of capital, then they would strive to attain a juster distribution of the products of labour. This immediately takes us to contentment and simplicity, voluntarily adopted. Under the new outlook multiplicity of material wants will not be the aim of life, the aim will be rather their restriction consistently with comfort. We shall cease to think of getting what we can, but we shall decline to receive what all cannot get. It occurs to me that it ought not to be difficult to make a successful appeal to the masses of Europe in terms of economics, and a fairly successful working of such an experiment must lead to immense and unconscious spiritual results. I do not believe that the spiritual

law works on a field of its own. On the contrary, it expresses itself only through the ordinary activities of life. It thus affects the economic, the social and the political fields. If the masses of Europe can be persuaded to adopt the view I have suggested, it will be found that violence will be wholly unnecessary to attain the aim, and that they can easily come to their own by following out the obvious corollaries of non-violence. It may even be that what seems to me to be so natural and feasible for India may take longer to permeate the inert Indian masses than the active European masses. But I must reiterate my confession that all my argument is based on suppositions and assumptions and must, therefore, be taken for what it is worth.

Young India, 3-9-1925

16

TO AMERICAN FRIENDS

It is a privilege for me to enjoy the friendship of so many unknown American and European friends. It pleases me to note that the circle is ever widening, perhaps more especially in America. I had the pleasure of receiving a warm invitation about a year ago to visit that continent. The same invitation has now been repeated with redoubled strength and with the offer to pay all expenses. I was unable then, as I am now, to respond to the kind invitation. To accept it is an easy enough task, but I must resist the temptation, for I feel that I can make no effective appeal to the people of that great continent unless I make my position good with the intellectuals of India.

I have not a shadow of doubt about the truth of my fundamental position. But I know that I am unable to carry with me the bulk of educated India. I can, therefore, gain no effective help for my country from the Americans and Europeans so long as I remain isolated from educated India. I do want to think in terms of the whole world. My patriotism includes the good of mankind in general. Therefore my service of India includes the service of humanity. But I feel that I should be going out of my orbit, if I left it for help from the West. I must be satisfied for the time being with such help as I can

get from the West, speaking to it from my smaller Indian platform. If I go to America or to Europe, I must go in my strength, not in my weakness, which I feel today — the weakness, I mean, of my country. For, the whole scheme for the liberation of India is based upon the development of internal strength. It is a plan of self-purification. The peoples of the West, therefore, can best help the Indian movement by setting apart specialists to study the inwardness of it. Let the specialists come to India with an open mind and in a spirit of humility as befits a searcher after Truth. Then perhaps they will see the reality instead of a glorified edition that, in spite of all my desires to be absolutely truthful, I am likely to present if I go to America. I believe in thought-power more than in the power of the word, whether written or spoken. And if the movement that I seek to represent has vitality in it and has divine blessing upon it, it will permeate the whole world without any physical presence in its different parts. Anyway at the present moment I see no light before me. I must patiently plod in India until I see my way clear for going outside the Indian border.

After pressing the invitation, the American friend puts a number of questions for my consideration. I welcome them and gladly take the opportunity of answering them through these columns. He says:

> "Whether you decide, now or later, to come here or not to come, I trust you will find the following questions worth considering. They have developed insistently in my mind for a long time."

His first question is:

> "Has the time arrived — or is it coming — when your best way to help India will be by moving the whole world — and especially England and America — to a new consciousness?"

I have partly answered the question already. In my opinion the time has not yet arrived — it may come any day — for me to go out of India to move the whole world to new consciousness. The process, however, is even now indirectly and unconsciously going on though slowly.

> "Are not the present-day interests of all mankind, everywhere, so inextricably interwoven that no single country like India can be moved far out of its present relationships to the others?"

I do believe with the writer that no single country can remain in isolation for any length of time. The present plan for securing Swaraj is to attain not a position of isolation but one of full self-realization and self-expression for the benefit of all. The present position of bondage and helplessness hurts not only India, not only England, but the whole world.

> "Is not your message and method essentially a world gospel — which will find its power in responsive souls, here and there, in many countries, who will thereby, gradually, remake the world ?"

If I can say so without arrogance and with due humility, my message and methods are indeed, in their essentials, for the whole world, and it gives me keen satisfaction to know that it has already received a wonderful response in the hearts of a large and daily growing number of men and women of the West.

> "If you demonstrate your message in the language only of the East and in terms only of Indian emergencies, is there not grave danger that inessentials will be confused with fundamentals, that some features which correspond only to extreme situations in India will be wrongly understood to be vital in the universal sense ?"

I am alive to the danger pointed out by the writer, but it seems to be inevitable. I am in the position of a scientist who is in the midst of a very incomplete experiment and who, therefore, is unable to forecast large results and larger corollaries in a language capable of being understood. In the experimental stage, therefore, I must run the risk of the experiment being misunderstood, as it has been and probably still is in many places.

> "Ought you not to come to America (which, in spite of all her faults, is perhaps, potentially, the most spiritual of all living peoples) and tell the world what your message means in terms of Western, as well as Eastern, civilization?"

People in general will understand my message through its results. The shortest way, therefore, perhaps, of making it effectively heard is to let it speak for itself, at any rate for the time being.

> "For example, should the Western followers of your inspiration preach and practise the spinning wheel?"

It is certainly not necessary for the Western people to preach and practise the spinning wheel unless they will do so out of sympathy, or for discipline, or with a view to applying their matchless inventive faculty to making the spinning wheel a better instrument while retaining its essential characteristic as a cottage industry. But the message of the spinning wheel is much wider than its circumference. Its message is one of simplicity, service of mankind, living so as not to hurt others, creating an indissoluble bond between the rich and the poor, capital and labour, the prince and the peasant. That larger message is naturally for all.

> "Is your condemnation of railroads, doctors, hospitals, and other features of modern civilization essential and unalterable? Should we not, first, try to develop a spirit great enough to spiritualize the machinery and the organized, scientific and productive powers of modern life?"

My condemnation of railroads etc., whilst true where it stands, has little or no bearing on the present movement which disregards none of the institutions mentioned by the writer. In the present movement I am attacking neither railroads nor hospitals; but in an ideal State they seem to me to have little or no place. The present movement is just the attempt the writer desires. Yet it is not an attempt to spiritualize the machinery—because that seems to me an impossible task—but to introduce, if it is at all possible, a human or the humane spirit among the men behind the machinery. Organization of machinery for the purpose of concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a few and for the exploitation of many I hold to be altogether wrong. Much of the organization of machinery of the present age is of that type. The movement of the spinning wheel is an organized attempt to displace machinery from that state of exclusiveness and exploitation and to place it in its proper state. Under my scheme, therefore, men in charge of machinery will think not of themselves or even of the nation to which they belong but of the whole human race. Thus Lancashire men will cease to use their machinery for exploiting India and other countries, but on the contrary they will devise means of enabling India to convert in her own villages her cotton into cloth. Nor will Americans, under my scheme, seek to enrich themselves by exploiting the other races of the earth through their inventive skill.

> "Is it not possible, in conditions so favourable as America's, to clarify and advance the evolution of the best human consciousness into such purpose and power, courage and beneficence, as shall liberate the souls of India's millions, and of all men everywhere?"

It is undoubtedly possible. Indeed it is my hope that America will seek the evolution of the best human consciousness; but that time is perhaps not yet. Probably it will not be before India has found her own soul. Nothing will please me more than to find America and Europe making the difficult path of India as easy as it is possible for them to do. They can do so by withdrawing the temptations in India's way and by encouraging her in her attempt to revive her ancient industries in her own villages.

> "Why is it that people like myself, in every country, are grateful to you and eager to follow you? Is it not for two reasons, chiefly:
>
> First: Because the next and basic need throughout the world is for a new spiritual consciousness—a realization, in the thought and feeling of average people, of the equal divinity of all human beings, and the unity, brotherhood, of all?
>
> Second: Because you, more than any other widely known man, have this consciousness, together with the power to arouse it in others?"

I can only hope that the writer's estimate is true.

> "It is a world need—is it not?—to which you have the best answer that God has vouchsafed to man. How can your mission be fulfilled in India alone? If my arm or leg could be vitalized to an extent far beyond the balance of my body, would that make for my general health, or even for the permanent best good of the one favoured member?"

I am fully aware that my mission cannot be fulfilled in India alone, but I hope I am humble enough to recognize my limitations and to see that I must keep for the time being to my restricted Indian platform till I know the result of the experiment in India itself. As I have already replied, I should like to see India free and strong so that she may offer herself as a willing and pure sacrifice for the betterment of the world. The individual, being pure, sacrifices himself for the family, the latter for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation, the nation for all.

> "May I even submit—with deep reverence for your message —that possibly your own vision and inspiration would benefit by adjustment to the world instead of only, or chiefly, to India?"

I recognize the considerable force of the foregoing statement. It is not at all impossible that a visit to the West may give me not a wider outlook—for I have endeavoured to show that it is the widest possible—but it may enable me to discover new methods of realizing the outlook. If such is my need, God will open the way for me.

> "Is the political form of government, in India or anywhere, so important as the average individual's soul force—his courageous expression of the best inspiration he can derive from the divine spirit within and all about him?"

The average individual's soul force is any day the most important thing. The political form is but a concrete expression of that soul force. I do not conceive the average individual's soul force as distinguished and existing apart from the political form of government. Hence I believe that after all a people has the government which it deserves. In other words, self-government can only come through self-effort.

> "Is not the basic need, everywhere, for the clarification and development of this soul force in individuals— beginning, possibly, with a few people and spreading like a divine contagion to the many?"

It is, indeed.

> "You teach, rightly, that the faithful development of such soul force in India will assure India's freedom. Will it not everywhere shape all political, economic and international institutions including the issues of peace or war? Can those forms of human civilization be made radically superior in India to the rest of the world—now, when all mankind are neighbours?"

I have already answered this question in the preceding paragraphs. I have claimed in these pages before now that India's freedom must revolutionize the world's outlook upon peace and war. Her impotence affects the whole of mankind.

> "You know, better than I or anyone, how all these questions should be answered. I chiefly seek to express my eager faith in your gospel, my hungry desire for your leadership in solving the urgent problems of America and of all mankind. Therefore, will you graciously remember that, if (or when) the time may come that India's progress in the directions you have so

> inspiringly outlined appears to pause—waiting for the Western world to come up alongside—then we of the West stand urging you to give us a few months of your time and your personal presence. My own feeling is that, if you will call us and instruct us, we (your uncounted followers scattered obscurely over the wide earth) will join our lives to yours in the discovery and realization of a new and noble, world-wide Commonwealth of the Spirit, in which man's age-old dreams of Brotherhood, Democracy, Peace, and Soul Progress shall characterize the daily life of average people—in India, England, America, and everywhere."

I wish I had confidence in my leadership on the world platform. I have no false modesty about me. If I felt the call within, I would not wait a single second but straightway respond to an invitation so cordial as this. But with my limitations of which I am painfully conscious, I feel somehow that my experiment must be restricted to a fragment. What may be true of the fragment is likely to be true of the whole. It is true indeed that India's progress in the direction I desire seems to have come to a pause; but I think that it only seems so. The little seed that was sown in 1920 has not perished. It is, I think, taking deep root. Presently it will come out as a stately tree. But if I am labouring under a delusion, I fear that no artificial stimulus that my visit to America may temporarily bring can revive it. I am pining for the assistance of the whole world. I see it coming. The urgent invitation is one of the many signs. But I know that we shall have to deserve it before it comes upon us like a mighty flood, a flood that cleanses and invigorates.

Young India, 17-9-1925

17

COMPULSORY MILITARY TRAINING

An Allahabad graduate writes:

"I am a registered graduate of the Allahabad University. I am entitled to vote for a candidate seeking election to the Allahabad University Court.

Exception has been taken to my opposition to making military training compulsory in the universities. On this point I seek your opinion through the columns of *Young India*. My view briefly is this:

I admit that under a Swaraj Government our young men would be required to take to the army as a career and we shall have to encourage that spirit. But under an alien government I feel there is absolutely no security that these university corps would not be used against the Indian nation, as the Indian army has been used in the past. Moreover, would it not be adding another link to the chain of moral slavery, if our young men are *compelled* to take up military training? Does it not clash with the ideal of a university, where at least we can expect a free atmosphere for growth? Would it not cast our ideals in a militarist mould? My information about foreign universities is limited, but so far as I could gather I understand there is no compulsion even in universities of free countries like England and America. Even if we ignore political considerations, should we not allow the individual his freedom of conscience to preserve which large numbers of Englishmen went to jail during the War? All of them were not afraid to die.

These are considerations which deserve fullest attention. On the other hand, compulsion in physical training I would gladly support—as a matter of fact, I advocate. I feel that, if it is made compulsory, all the requirements of a university would be met.

We should not shut the doors of the university against those who hold different views on life or politics. There is already too much of cramping in these institutions."

As a pacifist by religion I heartily endorse all that my correspondent says about compulsory military training in the universities. But the argument seems to be sound even from the purely utilitarian and national standpoint. Not only can there be no security against the use being made of university corps for purposes antagonistic to the national interest, but whilst the

Government retain its anti-national character there is every likelihood of these corps being used against the nation on due occasions. What, for instance, could prevent a future Dyer from using these university men for enacting another Jalianwala Bagh? May not young men themselves offer their services for an expedition against the innocent Chinese or the equally innocent Tibetans when their subjection is felt necessary in the interest of imperial commerce? Some of the young volunteers who served during the war justified their action by saying that thereby they gained experience in the art of war—just the reason which consciously or unconsciously prompted some of the Frontier expeditions. Those who run empires successfully have an instinctive knowledge of human nature. It is not deliberately bad or wicked. It acts excellently under a high impulse. And thousands of young men, who before they join any corps must take the oath of allegiance and must on scores of occasions salute the Union Jack, will naturally want to give a good account of their loyalty and willingly shoot down their fellow-men upon receiving from their superiors orders to fire. Whilst, therefore, even as an out and out believer in *ahimsa* I can understand and appreciate military training for those who believe in the necessity of the use of arms on given occasions, I am unable to advocate the military training of the youth of the country under the Government so long as it remains utterly irresponsive to the needs of the people; and I should be against compulsory military training in every case and even under a national Government. Those who do not wish to take the military training should not be debarred from joining public universities. Physical culture stands on a different basis altogether. It can be and should be part of any sound educational scheme even as many other subjects are.

Young India, 24-9-1925

18

FROM EUROPE

When I think of my littleness and my limitations on the one hand and of the expectations raised about me on the other, I become dazed for the moment; but I come to myself as soon as I realize that these expectations are a tribute not to me, a curious mixture of Jekyll and Hyde, but to the incarnation, however imperfect but comparatively great, in me of the two priceless qualities of truth and non-violence. I must, therefore, not shirk the responsibility of giving what aid I can to fellow seekers after Truth from the West.

I have already dealt with a letter from America. I have before me one from Germany. It is a closely reasoned letter. It has remained with me for nearly a month. At first I thought I would send a private reply and let it be published in Germany if the correspondent desired it. But having re-read the letter I have come to the conclusion that I should deal with it in these columns. I give the letter below in full :

> "Not only India but also the rest of the earth has heard your message of Satyagraha and Swadeshi. A great number of young people in Europe believe in your creed. They see in it a new attitude to political things put into action, of which till now they had only dreamed.
>
> But also among the young people who are convinced of the truth of your message are many who dissent from some details of your demands on men which seem wrong to them. In their name is this letter written.
>
> In answer to a question you declared on the 21st of March, 1921, that Satyagraha demands absolute non-violence, and that even a woman who is in danger of being violated must not defend herself with violence. On the other hand it is known that you recommended the punishment of General Dyer by the English Government, which shows that you see the necessity for law guaranteed through violence. From this I can but conclude that you do not object to capital punishment and so do not condemn killing in general. You value life so low that you allow thousands of Indians to lose theirs for Satyagraha; and doubtless you know that the least interference with the life of men—imprisonment—is mainly based on the same principle as the strongest—killing—for in each case men are

caused by an outside force to diverge from their *dharma*. A man who thinks logically knows that it is the same principle that causes his imprisonment for a few days or his execution, and that the difference is only in the size, not in the kind, of interference. He knows, too, that a man who stands for punishment in general must not shrink from killing.

You see in non-co-operation not an ideal only but also a safe and quick way to freedom for India, a way possible only where a whole population has to revolt against a Government that has the force of arms. But when a whole State wants to get its rights from another State, the principle of non-co-operation is powerless, for this other one may get a number of other States to form an alliance with it even when some of the other States remain neutral. Not until a real League of Nations exists, to which every State belongs, can non-co-operation become a real power, since no State can afford to be isolated from all the others. That is why we fight for the League of Nations; but that is also the reason why we try to retain a strong police force, lest internal revolts and disorder should make all foreign policy impossible. That is why we understand that other Governments are doing what they forbade us to do, arming themselves in case of an attack by their enemies. They are, for the time being, obliged to do so, and we really ought to do the same if we do not want to be continually violated. We hope that you will see our point. If you do, we should be very much obliged to you if you would say so in answer to this letter, for it is necessary that the youth of Europe learns your true attitude to these questions. But please do not think that we want you to forswear something that is one of the main points of your creed—Satyagraha.

But we see Satyagraha not in an absolute non-violence which never, nowhere, has been really carried out, even by you, or even by Christ himself who drove the usurers out of the temple. With us Satyagraha is the unreserved disposition to brotherhood and sacrifice which you are showing us so splendidly with the Indian people; and we hope to be growing into the same state of mind, since it has been understood that a system may be wicked but never a whole class or a whole people (you wrote about this on the 13th of July, 1921), and that one ought to feel pity but not hatred for the blind defenders of wickedness. Men who come to understand this are taking their first steps on the new way to brotherhood between all men; and this way will lead to the goal, to the victory of truth, to Satyagraha.

We ask you in your answer not only to advise us to fight for our country in the way we think right, but we would very much like to know what you think to be right, especially how you justify an entire non-violence which we see as a resignation to all real fighting against wickedness and for this reason wicked

in itself—as we would call a policeman wicked who let a criminal escape unpunished.

Our conviction is that we ought to follow our own *dharma* first, and before all that we ought to live the life designed for us by God, but that the right and the duty is given to us to interfere with the life of our fellow-men when they ask us to do so or when we see in such interference a way to fight a threatening evil for all the world. We believe that otherwise one is not right in interfering, for only God can see through the soul of men and judge what is the right way for men; and we believe that there is no greater sacrilege to be found than to assume the place of God—which sacrilege we believe the English people to be guilty of, as they think to have the mission to interfere with people all over the world.

For this reason we do not understand how you can recommend to married people to deny themselves to each other without mutual agreement, for such an interference with the rights given by marriage can drive a man to crimes. You ought to advise divorce in those cases.

Please answer these our questions. We are so glad to have the model given by you that we want very much to be quite clear about the right way to live up to your standard."

In my travels I have not the file of *Young India* before me, but there is no difficulty about my endorsing the statement that "Satyagraha demands absolute non-violence, and that even a woman who is in danger of being violated must not defend herself with violence." Both these statements relate to an ideal state, and therefore are made with reference to those men and women who have so far purified themselves as to have no malice, no anger, no violence in them. That does not mean that the woman in the imagined case would quietly allow herself to be violated. In the first instance such a woman would stand in no danger of violence; and in the second, if she did, without doing violence to the ruffian she would be able completely to defend her honour.

But I must not enter into details. Even women who can defend themselves with violence are not many. Happily, however, cases of indecent assaults are not also very many. Be that as it may, I believe implicitly in the proposition that perfect purity is its own defence. The veriest ruffian becomes for the time being tame in the presence of resplendent purity.

The writer is not correctly informed about my attitude in regard to General Dyer. He would be pleased to know that not only did I not recommend any punishment of General Dyer, but even my colleagues, largely out of their generous regard for me, waived the demands for punishment. What, however, I did ask for, and I do press for even now, is the stopping of the pension to General Dyer. It is no part of the plan of non-violence to pay the wrong-doer for the wrong he does, which practically would be the case if I became a willing party to the continuation of the pension to General Dyer. But let me not be misunderstood. I am quite capable of recommending even punishment to wrong-doers under conceivable circumstances; for instance, I would not hesitate under the present state of society to confine thieves and robbers, which is in itself a kind of punishment. But I would also admit that it is not Satyagraha, and that it is a fall from the pure doctrine. That would be an admission not of the weakness of the doctrine but the weakness of myself. I have no other remedy to suggest in such cases in the present state of society. I am therefore satisfied with advocating the use of prison more as reformatories than as places of punishment.

But I would draw the distinction between killing and detention or even corporal punishment. I think that there is a difference not merely in quantity but also in quality. I can recall the punishment of detention. I can make reparation to the man upon whom I inflict corporal punishment. But once a man is killed, the punishment is beyond recall or reparation. God alone can take life, because He alone gives it.

I hope there is no confusion in the writer's mind when he couples the self-immolation of a Satyagrahi with the punishment imposed from without. But in order to avoid even a possibility of it, let me make it clear that the doctrine of violence has reference only to the doing of injury by one to another. Suffering injury in one's own person is, on the contrary, of the essence of non-violence and is the chosen substitute for violence to others. It is not because I value life low that I can countenance with joy thousands voluntarily losing their lives for Satyagraha, but because I know that it results in the long run in the least loss of life, and, what is more, it ennobles those who lose their lives and morally enriches the

world for their sacrifice. I think that the writer is correct in saying that non-cooperation is not merely an ideal but also "a safe and quick way to freedom for India," I do suggest that the doctrine holds good also as between States and States. I know that I am treading on delicate ground if I refer to the late war. But I fear that I must, in order to make the position clear. It was a war of aggrandizement, as I have understood, on either part. It was a war of dividing the spoils of the exploitation of weaker races—otherwise euphemistically called the world commerce. If Germany to-day changed her policy and made a determination to use her freedom not for dividing the commerce of the world but for protecting through her moral superiority the weaker races of the earth, she could certainly do that without armament. It would be found that before general disarmament in Europe commences, as it must some day unless Europe is to commit suicide, some nation will have to dare to disarm herself and take large risks. The level of non-violence in that nation, if that event happily comes to pass, will naturally have risen so high as to command universal respect. Her judgments will be unerring, her decisions will be firm, her capacity for heroic self-sacrifice will be great, and she will want to live as much for other nations as for herself. I may not push this delicate subject any further. I know that I am writing in a theoretical way upon a practical question without knowing all its bearings. My only excuse is, if I understand it correctly, that that is what the writer has wanted me to do.

I do justify entire non-violence, and consider it possible in relation between man and man and nations and nations; but it is not "a resignation from all real fighting against wickedness". On the contrary, the non-violence of my conception is a more active and more real fighting against wickedness than retaliation whose very nature is to increase wickedness. I contemplate a mental, and therefore a moral, opposition to immoralities. I seek entirely to blunt the edge of the tyrant's sword, not by putting up against it a sharper-edged weapon, but by disappointing his expectation that I would be offering physical resistance. The resistance of the soul that I should offer instead would elude him. It would at first dazzle him, and at last compel recognition from him, which recognition would not humiliate him but would uplift him. It may be urged that this

again is an ideal state. And so it is. The propositions from which I have drawn my arguments are as true as Euclid's definitions, which are none the less true, because in practice we are unable even to draw Euclid's line on a blackboard. But even a geometrician finds it impossible to get on without bearing in mind Euclid's definitions. Nor may we, the German friend, his colleagues and myself, dispense with the fundamental propositions on which the doctrine of Satyagraha is based.

There remains for me now only one ticklish question to answer. In a most ingenious manner the writer has compared the English arrogation of the right of becoming tutors to the whole world to my views on relations between married people. But the comparison does not hold good. The marriage bond involves seeing each other only by mutual agreement. But surely abstention requires no consent. Married life would be intolerable, as it does become, when one partner breaks through all bonds of restraint. Marriage confirms the right of union between two partners to the exclusion of all the others when in their joint opinion they consider such union to be desirable. But it confers no right upon one partner to demand obedience of the other to one's wish for union. What should be done when one partner on moral or other grounds cannot conform to the wishes of the other is a separate question. Personally, if divorce was the only alternative, I should not hesitate to accept it, rather than interrupt my moral progress—assuming that I want to restrain myself on purely moral grounds.

Young India, 8-10-1925

19

EUROPEAN CIVILIZATION

A Danish friend sends me translation of extracts from an article printed in *Gads Danske Magasin.* The heading he has given to the extracts is "European civilization and Gandhi". In adopting his heading for *Young India* I have omitted my name, as I have omitted references to my views in the extracts. My views are nothing new to the readers of *Young India.* Here is the translation received:

> "Europe boasts of her civilization, her Christian civilization.
>
> The triumphant career of the White race throughout the earth is the watchword of the time.
>
> A triumphant career of the race—that is true. But of Civilization, Humanity, Christianity? Justice turns her face away and weeps.
>
> Will you find a hell of racial hatred and inhumanity? Then go to Europe.
>
> Look at the collective policy of the Christian Powers in China. First act: shameless extortion, exercised for ages by European profiteers. Second act: the enraged natives react by killing a German ambassador. Third act: Europe undertakes her 'Hunnic crusade' under German lead, and in the spirit of that watchword which was ironically pronounced by the satirical paper *Simplicissimus* in an imagined speech of the German officer: 'Now I propose a toast to a vigorous propagation of the Gospel and a victorious walk over the Chinese swine-dogs (Schweinehunde)!'
>
> Too justly the Chinese have called us 'the red-haired barbarians' or 'the red-haired devils'.
>
> Let us now look at some species of the European *homo sapiens.*
>
> The Italians may deserve honourable mention, because Christianity caused them to give up their bestial baitings of wild beasts about 400 A.D. How unwillingly the ancient Romans gave up their 'circenses' appears from a curious anecdote. A clergyman found it difficult to keep the converted away from the circus. Then he said: 'Dear Christians! You *must* avoid these bloody heathen plays. Then, in reward, you may hope that in heaven there may be a peep-hole through which you may re-

gard the condemned sinners in the eternal fire of the hell!' Indeed, a fine and noble 'Christian' idea!

To characterize the standard of the 'most Christian' nation of Spaniards it is sufficient to mention the fact that the favourite play of the nation is till this day the bull fight. The national hero is the 'grantoreador'—a cruel tormentor of animals.

France has created the hunting 'parforce'.

England adheres to the same noble sport. Look at the illustrated papers published in honour of the Christmas, the Christian feast of peace and charity! During a dinner in Denmark, a Danish gentleman by the way told an English lady that he had shot a fox. 'Good gracious! You don't say so! *Shot* a fox?' cried she immediately, seizing him by his arm. Then she turned him her back with contempt, for it was unworthy of a gentleman *not* to torment the poor animal to death! A Danish clergyman sailing on the Red Sea once witnessed the natives diving from the steamer for coins. But the English ladies were not content to see them jump out from the deck; they ordered them to jump out from the tops of the masts, to make it more exciting! The opium war and the treatment of Eire in past centuries are other proofs of English morals. Owing to the resistance of the English nation to conscription, England fortunately has avoided the use of forced cannon-food. But what was the munificently promised reward of the Indian volunteers in the great war? It is sufficient to name Amritsar.

Germany has created the most brutal 'moral of masters' before the Bolshevism and the most systematic oppression of the nations 'of minor value' ('minderwertig'). The Pan-German programme of 1895 privileges the 'full Germans' to vote, to be elected for parliaments and offices, and to buy ground property. They willingly tolerate the foreigners in the country as exercisers of the '*Inferior Bodily Labour*'. A Danish surgeon as visitor in a German hospital once witnessed the transfer of living tissue from one body into another. As he wondered how it would be possible to obtain sufficient mass of tissue, the German professor answered: '*Wir haben ja Polen genug*' (We have enough of Poles). The Delbruck Law of 1912 enabled German emigrants to remain secretly citizens of the German Empire, after they had officially obtained the citizenship of the unsuspecting foreign States, a fine and noble means of creating thousands of underground agents of Pan-Germanism. Conscription procured the Germans millions of sons of the 'minderwertig' nations to serve as cannon-food in their wars, while the relations of the victims were oppressed at home in the most brutal manner.

6,000 Danes from North Schelsvig were thus slaughtered in the great war for a foreign and hated cause. Through the 'civil conscription' the Germans carried away thousands of Belgians into slavery; sometimes these wretches were even forced to work within the line of fire.

Bolshevism is indebted to the great German Staff for the fortunate foundation of its rule. Pan-German methods of brutality and lie are unfortunately practised and even surpassed. We observe an element of Jewish fanaticism, which results in mere madness. We may here refer to the contents of a Bolshevist poem from the collection 'Tsheka ulibajet', published in 1922 by A. Saprudni: 'You prefer to sing of love. I will teach you other songs, of blood, execution, and death. Enough of the gentle fragrance of lilacs! I prefer the flowers of murder. It is the highest delight to crucify the man who loves his neighbour. What a fun to cut a man to pieces! Look, how he quivers for fear, look at his convulsions while he is slowly strangled by the hangman. What a pleasure to inflict wounds. Listen to our sentence of death: a rope, a shot! A wall! Give fire!—And the grave is your fate.'

Three points of European morals are emphasized, viz. the moral of masters, the policy of lie, and the policy of murder. In order to illustrate the European standard, I quote an address delivered by Professor Theol, Baumgarten in Kiel 1915 (printed in Norddentsche Allgemeine Zeitung, 15th May, 1915).

The pious professor states that the Sermon on the Mount simply excludes war. But this rule is only meant for single persons. 'The ethical system of the Sermon on the Mount represents another compartment of our moral life than our national standard. Its rules for the single soul are not broken, because we realize that it is not at the same time a law for our national and social life.' The State, says Prof. B., is created by God and must be defended with the utmost energy. 'It is a characteristic of the great nation that it uses the most extreme means, and even the war of aggression, in order to carry out its great aims.' 'We Germans feel obliged, not only to agree with the war, but also to lead it with the most absolute recklessness. He who has not in these days made up his mind to salute the destruction of Lusitania with jubilant applause and to rejoice at the formidable power of German arms, is no right German.' "

These extracts present a very lurid picture, but probably they are true in substance. That the sum total of the activities of European nations is a denial of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount will not, I think, be gainsaid. I have produced the extracts merely to emphasize the necessary caution against our being lifted off our feet by the dazzle and the glitter of European

arms. If the foregoing picture were the whole of Europe, it would be sad for Europe as for the world. Fortunately there is a considerable body of men and women of Europe who are devoting the whole of their energy to combat the war-fever and the breathless pursuit after material wealth and enjoyment. There are reasons for hoping that this body is daily gaining in numbers and in influence. May it be the privilege of India to take part in the new awakening and to advance it, instead of retarding it, by succumbing to the European excesses which the best mind of Europe condemns in unmeasured terms and is manfully struggling to bring under effective control.

Young India, 15-10-1925

20

A QUESTION

> "Were you not helping the cause of war when you, both while in Africa and here, enlisted men for field service? How does it tally with your principle of *ahimsa*?"

By enlisting men for ambulance-work in South Africa and in England, and recruits for field service in India, I helped not the cause of war, but I helped the institution called the British Empire in whose ultimate beneficial character I then believed. My repugnance to war was as strong then as it is today; and I could not then have, and would not have, shouldered a rifle. But one's life is not a single straight line; it is a bundle of duties very often conflicting. And one is called upon continually to make one's choice between one duty and another. As a citizen not then, and not even now, but a reformer leading an agitation against the institution of war, I had to advise and lead men who believed in war but who, from cowardice or from base motives or from anger against the British Government, refrained from enlisting. I did not hesitate to advise them that, so long as they believed in war and professed loyalty to the British constitution, they were in duty bound to support it by enlistment. Though I do not believe in the use of arms, and though it is contrary to the religion of *ahimsa* which I profess, I should not hesitate to join an agitation for a repeal of the debasing Arms Act which I have considered amongst the blackest crimes

of the British Government against India. I do not believe in retaliation, but I did not hesitate to tell the villagers near Bettiah four years ago that they who knew nothing of *ahimsa* were guilty of cowardice in failing to defend the honour of their womenfolk and their property by force of arms. And I have not hesitated, as the correspondent should know, only recently to tell the Hindus that, if they do not believe in out and out *ahimsa* and cannot practise it, they will be guilty of a crime against their religion and humanity, if they fail to defend by force of arms the honour of their women against any kidnapper who chooses to take away their women. And all this advice and my previous practice I hold to be not only consistent with my profession of the religion of *ahimsa* out and out, but a direct result of it. To state that noble doctrine is simple enough; to know it and to practise it in the midst of a world full of strife, turmoil and passions, is a task whose difficulty I realize more and more day by day. And yet the conviction too that without it life is not worth living is growing daily deeper.

Young India, 5-11-1925

21

OUR IMPOTENCE

The following letter has been addressed to me by Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan and Dr. Ansari who have just returned from a prolonged tour on the Continent including Syria :

> "Recent events in Southern Syria, the country where Druses live and where an armed resistance is being carried on by these oppressed people against the French, the Mandatory Power, have brought to light the frightfulness of the French authorities there. A cable, received two days back from Palestine, sent by Syed Jamaluddin-al-husaini, Secretary of Lajnatut-Tanfiziyah, the most popular and influential organization of the people of Palestine, says that the town of Damascus has terribly suffered from the French bombardment and the death roll has been tremendous. Although from the various accounts published in the British Press one could gather that things were bad in Syria, yet this telegram from Palestine and Reuter's cable from Cairo, received subsequently, show the utter barbarity and inhumanity which are being practised by the French on the population in the Druse country and Damascus.

Apart from the recent instances of frightfulness, our tour in Syria brought under our observation many facts which proved the callousness of the French and their utter disregard for the elementary rights of the people of the mandated territory in Syria.

We have already published our experiences in the Indian Press, but in order to save you the trouble of reading the Urdu reports published in *Hamdard*, we would briefly give you some of the most salient facts regarding the situation in Syria.

When the League of Nations gave the mandate of Syria to France, the French Government and the High Commissioner made a public declaration to the people of Syria of granting them complete autonomy regarding their internal affairs. Syria was to be divided in several autonomous provinces, each with a Governor, elected by the people, and an advisory council representing the people and elected by them. Whilst this promise was partially and outwardly carried out in the provinces of Lebanon and Damascus, the province of Hauran, the country of Druses, was neither given autonomy nor a council nor a president elected by them, but a French officer, Captain Carbiollet, was forced on the Druses against their wish; and when they made demonstrations and representations against this, their deputation was insulted, their notables were publicly thrashed and imprisoned, and their womenfolk were maltreated.

Captain Carbiollet, who had come from French Congo, practised all the atrocities to which the poor inhabitants of French Congo had been subjected by the French; but the Druses, being an ancient, proud, warlike race, resisted these methods and were forced to take up arms. They inflicted considerable losses on the French forces, and have so far resisted the French invasion of their country successfully; but the methods practised by the French in the adjoining parts of Syria, viz. Damascus and Alleppo, are causing the spread of revolt to these parts. The telegrams quoted above refer to the most recent atrocities committed on the people of Damascus.

The French Government are also practising unfair and dishonest methods, and are depleting the country of its wealth by removing all the gold in the country and replacing it by paper money. They are gradually undermining all the economic resources of the country, which is resulting in destitution and poverty. To add to this depletion they have also been collecting gold from the people of towns and villages in the shape of fines and punishments.

We are writing this to you in order to elicit your sympathy for these Asiatic brethren, and to request you, as the President of the Congress, to send a cable to the League of Nations which has granted this mandate to France, and to instruct other Con-

gress organizations to do the same. We are conscious that the present situation in India is not very favourable to such an action, but it is our considered opinion, as Indians, as Muslims, and as Asiatics, that we should sympathize with all the oppressed Asiatic people, and cultivate friendly relations with them which would be beneficial to us and to them."

I could not see my way to accept their advice to send a cable to the League of Nations in the name of the Congress, and therefore sent the following answer:

> "I have the letter signed by you and Hakim Saheb. What is the use of the Congress President sending a cable to the League of Nations? I feel like a caged lion, only with this difference that the lion foams and frets and gnashes his teeth and lashes the iron bars furiously in the vain attempt to be free, whereas I recognize my limitations and refuse to foam and fret. If we had any power behind us, I would immediately send the cable suggested by you. Things I omit to mention in the pages of *Young India* are buried deep down in my bosom, and they are far weightier than those I advertise. But I do not fail to advertise them daily before the Unseen Power. When I think of the horizon about us, my heart becomes sick and weary. And when I listen to the still small voice within, I derive hope and smile in spite of the conflagration raging round me. Do save me from having to advertise our impotence."

But the next best thing I could do was to publish the valuable letter and my reply. I do not believe in making appeals when there is no force behind them, whether moral or material. Moral force comes from the determination of the appellants to do something, to sacrifice something for the sake of making their appeal effective. Even children instinctively know this elementary principle. They starve, they cry, or, if they are naughty, they do not hesitate to strike their mothers who will not grant their peremptory demands. Unless we recognize and are prepared to reduce to practise this principle, we can but expose the Congress and ourselves to ridicule, if not worse.

We cannot be naughty even if we will. We *can* suffer if *only* we will. I want us as Indians, Hindus or Mussalmans, Christians or Parsis, or Asiatics, to realize our impotence, in the face of this humiliation, barbarity, Dyerism, or call it what you will, inflicted on Syria. A definite realization of our impotence might teach us to imitate, if it is only the animals who in the presence of stormy weather come close together and seek

warmth and courage from one another. They do not make a vain appeal to the god of the weather to moderate his wrath. They simply provide against it.

And we? Hindus and Mussalmans fight against one another, and the gulf seems to be daily widening. We have not yet understood the meaning of the charkha. Those that have, find all kinds of pretexts not to wear khaddar and not to spin. The storm is raging round us. And instead of seeking warmth one from the other, we prefer to shiver or petition the god of storms to stay his hand. If I cannot bring about Hindu-Muslim union or persuade the people to take up the wheel, I have the wisdom at least not to sign any petition for mercy.

And what is the League of Nations? Is it not in reality merely England and France? Do the other Powers count? Is it any use appealing to France which is denying her motto of Fraternity, Equality and Justice? She has denied justice to Germany, there is little fraternity between her and the Riffs, and the doctrine of equality she is trampling under foot in Syria. If we would appeal to England, we need not go to the League of Nations. She is much nearer home. She is perched on the heights of Simla except when she descends to Delhi for a brief period. But to appeal to her is to appeal to Caesar against Augustus.

Let us then perceive the truth in its nakedness, and learn to appeal to the nation to do her duty. Relief of Syria lies through India. And if we cannot appreciate our greatness, let us confess our littleness and say nothing. But we need not be little. Let us do at least one thing thoroughly—either fight to the bitter end, even as our brothers the four-footed animals often do, or as men let us learn and teach through co-operation on the largest scale known to the world the uselessness, nay, the sinfulness of exploitation of those weaker than ourselves. That co-operation among millions is possible only through the spinning wheel.

Young India, 12-11-1925

22

IN MITIGATION

I gladly publish the following from a German friend:

"Last year, you published in *Young India* several articles on or letters from Germany which needs must give wrong impressions as to the situation in our country. I intend to set right any false information about our country, though I am convinced you won't have got contemptuous opinion concerning the German nation. I hope you will endorse a statement of C. F. Andrews writing to me on the 10th of July 1925: 'I believe that India and Germany may meet on the basis of pure idealism more closely than any other nations of the world.' And in all humility I should like to give some remarks, for your information, on the above-mentioned articles.

Let me begin with one of your deepest confessions: 'My Refuge' (*Y. I.*, 9-10-'24). Every word of criticism should remain silent before such a prayer. But even unconsciously no wrong should be done even to the Kaiser. He never aimed at the crown of Europe. His idea was only a fantastic creation of war propaganda. The Kaiser was neither a monster nor a Caesar; he was a pitiful actor, a poor fool, a product of a wrong education and flattering milieu. We don't excuse him, but we won't plead him guilty for intentions never intended.

As to the article 'From Europe' (*Y. I.*, 1925, No. 41) nothing need be objected to. I feel that letter was written by a member of the German Youth Movement. And the movement of regenerating the soul and spirit among the young of all nations from Europe to China, India and America may fill you with more confidence for the future. I hope the younger generation once will realize what the older failed to do. Most of them are anti-imperialistic, and stand for justice and freedom among all the nations and for the independence of so-called colonies; they try to leave the old tract of capitalism and materialism. I will send some booklets containing reports from the English Youth Movement. Though it is still small, it is a great and new hope for coming years. Some of the pamphlets are only proofs, but you will be interested in the reports on Indian youth.

The article on 'European Civilization' in No. 42 is right in its tendency and sceptical view. But I fear that something of Denmark's antipathy towards Germany might have exaggerated the information. The moral of masters as a romantic conception of Neitzche's philosophy of life has nothing to do with the military moral of Prussian Generals who forgot the measure.

The Pan-German propaganda was the senseless activity of a small though dangerous clique, and never got a decisive influence on the official decisions of our Government, excepting perhaps during the last months of the war (Ludendorff !). Professor Baumgarten himself as a liberal theologian in the later years of the war was one of the leading personalities in the fight against militarism and for a peaceful agreement among the nations.

The anecdote of the transfer of living tissue ('we have enough of Poles for it') may be true, but exaggerated. In no way can it be generalized. It may have been a practical joke; as chirurgy very often shows a very inhuman aspect, because the physicians try to hide their inmost feelings or they would be overwhelmed by compassion. Remember that Germany, already in war time before her serious defeat, created a free State for the Poles.

The Schleswig question is much complicated. We did wrong enough in the war, the greatest being the invasion into Belgium; but we did not order 6,000 Schleswig Danes to be slaughtered. The inhabitants of Schleswig and of Alsace were as much subjects of the German Government as the Irish of the English. Germany was brutal in her defence, but which of our former adversaries was less brutal and more reconciliatory?

I think we only will make a step forward by leaving back the past period, not by stirring up again and again these black and tragic impressions of European breakdown, and imputing the moral responsibility to one nation or another. We all, also the Danes, were on the wrong way; we all—Germany hand in hand with Denmark—must look out for the revival of the soul, of real culture, of belief.

Last, No. 47: 'A Cry from Germany'. We fully agree with your answer. The writer is one of the sentimental passive types of an eccentric feeling we often find in times of distress. Corruption is not worse here than elsewhere. There's only one remedy: Action! Do, do something. There are many tasks in a regenerating nation and in a young constitution. You will have got more of such letters from enthusiastic, even hysterical, German admirers. We understand their feelings, we regret them, but they are not representative of Germany."

The writer is right in feeling assured that I can have no contemptuous opinion about Germans or Germany. Who can dare? Germans are a great and brave people. Their industry, their scholarship, and their bravery command the admiration of the world. One hopes that they will lead the peace movement. They were defeated in the last war, not vanquished. All that is needed is a transmutation of their marvellous energy

for the promotion of the progress of the world as a whole, rather than its application for their own as against that of the whole world. There are signs of that desirable change coming over them as over the other peoples of the earth.

Young India, 25-2-1926

23

WAR OR PEACE?

It was not without purpose that I reproduced the main parts of Mr. Kirby Page's very able pamphlet on the World War. I hope that the reader followed them with the care and attention the chapters deserved. Mr. Page has proved conclusively that both the parties were equally to blame, and that both resorted to barbarous and inhuman practices. We did not need Mr. Page's help to learn that no war of which history has any record took so many lives as this did. Moral loss was greater still. Poisonous forces destructive of the soul (lying and deception) were brought to perfection as much as the forces destructive of the body. The moral results have been as terrible as the physical. It is yet too early to measure the effect on mankind of the collapse of the sexual morality brought about by the War. Vice has usurped the throne of virtue. The brute in man has for the time being gained supremacy.

The after-effects are, perhaps more terrible than the actual and immediate effects. There is no stability about the Government of any single State of Europe. No class is satisfied with its own condition. Each wants to better it at the expense of the rest. War between the States has now become a war within each State.

India has to make her choice. She may try, if she wishes, the way of war and sink lower than she has. In the Hindu-Muslim quarrel she seems to be taking her first lesson in the art of war. If India can possibly gain her freedom by war, her state will be no better and will be probably much worse than that of France or England. Past examples have become obsolete. Not even Japan's comparative progress can be any guide. For, 'the science' of war has made much greater 'progress' since the

Russo-Japanese war. Its result can only be studied in the present condition of Europe. We can safely say that, if India throws off the British yoke by the way of war, she must go through the state Mr. Page has graphically described.

But the way of peace is open to her. Her freedom is assured if she has patience. That way will be found to be the shortest even though it may appear to be the longest to our impatient nature. The way of peace insures internal growth and stability. We reject it because we fancy that it involves submission to the will of the ruler who has imposed himself upon us. But the moment we realize that the imposition is only so called and that, through our unwillingness to suffer loss of life or property, we are party to the imposition, all we need do is to change that negative attitude of passive endorsement. The suffering to be undergone by the change will be nothing compared to the physical suffering and the moral loss we must incur in trying the way of war. And the sufferings of war harm both the parties. The sufferings in following the way of peace must benefit both. They will be like the pleasurable travail of a new birth.

Let us not be misled by a hasty generalization of the events of 1920-21. Great as the achievement of that brilliant period was, it was nothing compared to what it might have been, had we been true and had faith. Violence was in the breasts of many of us whilst with our lips we paid homage to non-violence. And though we were thus false to our creed, so far as we had accepted it, we blamed it and lost faith instead of blaming and correcting ourselves. Chauri Chaura was a symptom of the disease that was poisoning us. Ours was claimed to be a peaceful, non-violent way. We could not sustain the claim in its fulness. The enemy's taunts we need not mind. They saw violence even where there was not a trace of it. But we could not disregard the judgment of the 'still small voice within'. It knew the violence within.

The way of peace is the way of truth. Truthfulness is even more important than peacefulness. Indeed, lying is the mother of violence. A truthful man cannot long remain violent. He will perceive in the course of his search that he has no need to be violent, and he will further discover that so long as there is the slightest trace of violence in him, he will fail to find the truth he is searching.

There is no half way between truth and non-violence on the one hand, and untruth and violence on the other. We may never be strong enough to be entirely non-violent in thought, word and deed. But we must keep non-violence as our goal and make steady progress towards it. The attainment of freedom, whether for a man, a nation or the world, must be in exact proportion to the attainment of non-violence by each. Let those, therefore, who believe in non-violence as the only method of achieving real freedom, keep the lamp of non-violence burning bright in the midst of the present impenetrable gloom. The truth of a few will count; the untruth of millions will vanish even like chaff before a whiff of wind.

Young India, 20-5-1926

24

HAS NON-VIOLENCE LIMITS?

The following is an extract from a detailed letter from a correspondent who gives his full name and address:

> "You may know what is happening to Congress workers in Madras. During the last two days the Justice Party men have excelled themselves in their abominations. Shri . . . accompanied by Shri . . . was canvassing votes for Shri . . ., the Congress candidate. A group of Justice men who kept following Shri . . . and others when they came near the Justice candidate's house suddenly surrounded the Congress workers and spat upon . . . and . . .'s faces. You know, none better, what indignity it is to be spat upon. Has communalism been able to demoralize public life and work to such a depth? The object of addressing you these few words is to ask you to enunciate your theory of non-violence with reference to what a Congressman should do under circumstances of such grave indignity and insult. There have also been assaults upon . . . So far as our attitude towards the Government is concerned, we admit it is expedient to be non-violent in conduct. But is that attitude to be continued in relation to our own misguided and cruel countrymen who take to assaulting, spitting, and to throwing night-soil on peaceful Congress workers? May I also bring to your notice that Congress sympathizers are many, while the paid hooligans are counted on one's fingers, so that, if we only want to put a stop to hooliganism, we can do it effectively by resorting to violent methods? But we happen to be members of an organization pledged to non-violence. The provocation is

> increasing every day, and it may not be possible for Congress workers to restrain the youthful followers from taking the law into their own hands. Therefore, may I ask you to state if private defence is compatible with non-violence and with what qualifications it should be exercised? The hooligan tactics of the Justice Party are testing our faith in non-violence very severely. Therefore we in Madras will greatly benefit by your advice at this critical moment. One reason why I request you to publish your opinion as early as you possibly can is that we are told that the Justice Party is experimenting with hooligan tactics to see if it succeeds, so that they might systematize it into a regular art of political warfare against the Congress in the coming Council and Assembly elections in November."

I have purposely erased names of men and places; for, their discovery is not required for my purpose. Time for expedient non-violence passed away long ago. Those who cannot be non-violent at heart are under no obligation to be non-violent under the circumstances mentioned by the correspondent. Though non-violence is the creed of the Congress, nobody now refers to the creed for being or remaining non-violent. Every Congressman who is non-violent, is so because he cannot be otherwise. My advice, therefore, emphatically is that no one need refer to me or any other Congressman for advice in the matter of non-violence. Everyone must act on his own responsibility, and interpret the Congress creed to the best of his ability and belief. I have often noticed that weak people have taken shelter under the Congress creed or under my advice, when they have simply, by reason of their cowardice, been unable to defend their own honour or that of those who were entrusted to their care. I recall the incident that happened near Bettiah when non-cooperation was at its height. Some villagers were looted. They had fled, leaving their wives, children and belongings to the mercy of the looters. When I rebuked them for their cowardice in thus neglecting their charge, they shamelessly pleaded non-violence. I publicly denounced their conduct and said that my non-violence fully accommodated violence offered by those who did not feel non-violence and who had in their keeping the honour of their womenfolk and little children. Non-violence is not a cover for cowardice, but it is the supreme virtue of the brave. Exercise of non-violence requires far greater bravery than that of swordsmanship. Cowardice is wholly inconsistent with non-violence. Translation from swordsmanship to non-violence is possible and, at times, even an

easy stage. Non-violence, therefore, presupposes ability to strike. It is a conscious deliberate restraint put upon one's desire for vengeance. But vengeance is any day superior to passive, effeminate and helpless submission. Forgiveness is higher still. Vengeance too is weakness. The desire for vengeance comes out of fear of harm, imaginary or real. A dog barks and bites when he fears. A man who fears no one on earth would consider it too troublesome even to summon up anger against one who is vainly trying to injure him. The sun does not wreak vengeance upon little children who throw dust at him. They only harm themselves in the act.

I do not know whether the statements made by the correspondent about the misdeeds of the Justice Party men are true. Perhaps there is another side to the story. But, assuming the truth of the statements, I can only congratulate those who are spat upon, or assaulted, or had night-soil thrown upon them. No injury has happened to them, if they had the courage to suffer the insult without even mental retaliation. But it was wholly wrong on their part to suffer it, if they felt irritated but refrained out of expedience from retaliating. A sense of self-respect disdains all expedience. But I wonder what kind of punishment could be meted out by distinguished Congressmen who, as the correspondent states, were too numerous for the few hooligans of the Justice Party. Were they to return night-soil with night-soil, spitting with spitting, and abuse with abuse? Or would the self-respect of this numerous party be better consulted by ignoring the few hooligans? When non-cooperation was the fashion, I know what was done to hooligans who tried to disturb meetings. They were held down by volunteers who caused them no hurt, but, if they continued to howl, their howling was ignored. I know that even in those days in several cases the law of non-violence was broken, and any man who dared to disturb the meetings or put in a word of opposition was howled down by the violent majority or sometimes even roughly handled to the discredit of the majority and the movement which they so thoughtlessly betrayed and misrepresented. I suggest also to this Congressman and to those whom he may represent that, if the object is to win over the Justice Party or any other Party to the Congress, then they should be treated gently even though they may act harshly. If it is to suppress all opponents, then

double retaliation or Dyerism is the chosen remedy. Whether that can bring us any nearer Swaraj is of course another question.

But all my advice is useless where conviction is wanting. Let every Congressman, therefore, weigh all the pros and cons, then make his definite choice and act accordingly, irrespective of consequences. He will then have acted truly even though it may be mistakenly. A thousand mistakes unconsciously made are better than the most scrupulously correct conduct without conviction behind to back it. It is like a whited sepulchre. Above all we must be true to ourselves, if we will be true to the country and lead it to its chosen goal. Let there be no cant about non-violence. It is not like a garment to be put on and off at will. Its seat is in the heart, and it must be an inseparable part of our very being.

Young India, 12-8-1926

25

NON-RESISTANCE TRUE AND FALSE

America is the house of the inter-racial conflict on a vast scale. There are earnest men and women in that land of enterprises who are seeking to solve the difficult problem along the lines of non-resistance. One such American friend sends me a paper called *The Inquiry* which contains an interesting discussion on the doctrine of non-resistance. It consists of instances that might possibly be grouped under non-resistance. I select three samples:

> "A Chinese student related his experience at the State University from which he was about to graduate. His reception there had been anything but friendly for the most part, although a few men had gone out of their way to befriend him, one of them even inviting the Chinese to his home for a week-end. On the other hand, a fellow student who occupied a room next to his made himself particularly obnoxious, throwing shoes against his door and indulging in other pranks. The Chinese overheard this student express horror on finding that an American had taken him home to introduce him to his mother and sister, and immediately he made up his mind that he would

teach this student to respect him, not for his own sake, but for the sake of his dear motherland.

So he went out of his way to be friendly to his neighbour. Every day he gave him a smiling good morning, though at first he received no response. He ignored every insult, but tried to make himself pleasant and useful. When he knew his neighbour to be hard up he casually invited him to go to a movie with him. Gradually they talked together more often and found they had several interests in common. After a while this student invited him to his home.

'We have become warm friends,' concluded the Chinese. 'I have since spent many holidays and week-ends at his home; and on leaving the university I shall know that one of my fellow students at least will regretfully miss me.'"

"The Secretary of a railroad Young Men's Christian Association brought one evening into the building twelve Danes, working on the railroad who had no place to sleep. The English-speaking men, under the sway of racial antipathy, began to object, and protested against the foreigners being brought in. Among these newcomers, however, was a skilled musician who, while the Americans were presenting their objections to the secretary, began to play up on the accordian. He discoursed sweet music, which soon had its effect. The ire on the faces of the native-born soon began to vanish; the censure died on their lips; their hearts were softened; and that night they sat up late listening to the foreigner playing. 'Peter Roberts, *The New Immigration*. The Macmillan Co., 1922, p. 300."

"There is a colony of Japanese in X, California. Several years ago some real estate agents sought to sell a considerable amount of land to other Japanese, and the white people were aroused at the thought of a great influx of these people. Meetings were held, and a big sign was put up on the main boulevard which read: 'No Japanese wanted here.'

"The old resident Japanese of X, who had lived on good terms with the white people, being members of their Farmers' Association, went to the white people, and after consultation finally agreed with them that a further increase in the Japanese population would not be a good thing. The sign was changed to read: 'No more Japanese wanted here.'

"The person who tells this story contends that this action advanced the solidarity of the community, and improved the relations between the whites and the Japanese in that place, as witness the following:

"The Japanese of X, learning that the American church was in financial difficulties, offered to give a definite amount yearly for its support, in addition to carrying on their own Japanese church work."

Now the first easily comes under true non-resistance. The second is more an instance of presence of mind than non-resistance. The third, from the facts as stated, is an instance, if not of cowardice as contended by some of the debators, certainly of selfishness. The resident Japanese population, in order to retain their earthly possessions, agreed to the prohibition of further Japanese immigration. It may have been sound policy. It may have been the only policy advisable. But it was not non-resistance.

Non-resistance is restraint voluntarily undertaken for the good of society. It is, therefore, an intensely active, purifying, inward force. It is often antagonistic to the material good of the non-resister. It may even mean his utter material ruin. It is rooted in internal strength, never weakness. It must be consciously exercised. It therefore presupposes ability to offer physical resistance. In the last instance, therefore, the Japanese would have non-resisted, if they had left all their possessions rather than surrendered the rights of prospective immigrants. They might also have suffered death or lynching without even mental retaliation and thus melted the hearts of their persecutors. It was not victory of truth that without any inconvenience to themselves they were able to retain their property. In terms of non-resistance, their contribution to the American Church in its difficulty was a bribe, by no means a token of goodwill or a free gift.

The acquisition of the spirit of non-resistance is a matter of long training in self-denial and appreciation of the hidden forces within ourselves. It changes one's outlook upon life. It puts different values upon things and upsets previous calculations, and when once it is intensive enough can overtake the whole universe. It is the greatest force because it is the highest expression of the soul. All need not possess the same measure of conscious non-resistance for its full operations. It is enough for one person only to possess it, even as one general is enough to regulate and dispose of the energy of millions of soldiers who enlist under his banner, even though they know not the why and the wherefore of his dispositions. The monkeys of one Rama were enough to confound the innumerable hosts armed from head to foot of the ten-headed Ravana.

Young India, 23-9-1926

26

STAND FOR NON-VIOLENCE

A friend sends me the following cutting from the New York *Nation*:

> "Some time ago (either in the latter part of 1924, or early in 1925) a band of twenty-five American missionaries in China addressed the following appeal to the American Minister at Peking:
>
> 'The undersigned American missionaries are in China as messengers of the gospel of brotherhood and peace. Our task is to lead men and women into a new life in Christ, which promotes brotherhood and takes away all occasions of war. We therefore express our earnest desire that no form of military pressure, especially no foreign military force, be exerted to protect us or our property; and that, in the event of our capture by lawless persons or our death at their hands, no money be paid for our release, no punitive expedition be sent out, and no indemnities be exacted. We take this stand believing that the way to establish righteousness and peace is through bringing the spirit of personal goodwill to bear on all persons under all circumstances, even through suffering wrong without retaliation.'
>
> "The American Legation, however, replied that this petition was inconsistent with the necessity that exists for safeguarding Americans in China, and that therefore no exception could or would be made in the procedure in case of emergencies with regard to the signers of the petition."

This is one of those instances in which two apparently contradictory positions are right at the same time. For the brave missionaries there was no other attitude possible, though now-a-days very few adopt it. Was it not about China that a missionary deputation some thirty years ago waited on the late Lord Salisbury and asked the protection of the British gunboats for carrying their message to the unwilling Chinese? Then the late noble Marquess had to tell the missionaries that, if they sought the protection of the British arms, they must submit to international obligations and curb their missionary ardour. He reminded them that the Christians of old, if they penetrated the remotest regions of the earth, expected no protection save from God and put their lives in constant danger.

In the case quoted by the New York *Nation*, the missionaries, according to the report, have reverted to the ancient practice.

The American Government, however, so long as it retains its present character, can only give the answer they are reported to have given. That the answer betrays the evil of the modern system is another matter. The American prestige depends not upon its moral strength but upon force. But why should the whole armed force of America be mobilized for the so-called vindication of its honour or name? What harm can accrue to the honour of America if twenty-five missionaries choose to go to China uninvited for the sake of delivering their message and get killed in the act? Probably it would be the best thing for their mission. The American Government by its interference could only interrupt the full working of the law of suffering. But self-restraint of America would mean a complete change of outlook. Today defence of citizenship is a defence of national commerce, i.e., exploitation. That exploitation presupposes the use of force for imposing commerce upon an unwilling people. Nations have, in a sense, therefore, almost become gangs of robbers, whereas they should be a peaceful combination of men and women united for the common good of mankind. In the latter case, their strength will lie not in their skill in the use of gunpowder, but in the possession of superior moral fibre. The action of the twenty-five missionaries is a dim shadow of reconstructed society or even reconstructed nations. I do not know whether they carried out their principle into practice in every department of life. I need hardly point out that, in spite of the threat of the American Government to protect them against themselves, they could neutralize, indeed even frustrate, any effort at retaliation. But that means complete self-effacement. And if one is to combat the fetish of force, it will only be by means totally different from those in vogue among the pure worshippers of brute force.

It must not be forgotten that after all there is a philosophy behind the modern worship of brute force with a history to back it. The microscopic non-militant minority has indeed nothing to fear from it, if only it has immovable faith behind it. But faith in the possibility of holding together society without brute force seems somehow to be lacking. Yet if one person can pit himself against the whole world, why cannot two or more do like-

wise together? I know the answer that has been given. Time alone can show the possibilities of the revolution that is silently creeping upon us. Speculation is waste of effort where action is already afoot. Those who have faith will join the initial effort in which demonstrable results cannot be shown.

Young India, 21-10-1926

27

'HUMANIZING WAR'!

I extract the following interesting paragraphs from an article headed 'War' in the March Number of *The Brotherhood*:

"Last time the women and children were only starved—it was done by a process cunningly disguised as 'economic pressure'—but next time they are to be gassed to death. Aeroplanes will drop penetrating poisons which will exterminate civil population; Edison says that it should not be difficult to dispose of London's millions in three hours. In every civilized country the chemists are at work searching for some particularly deadly poisons. In England, says *Truth*, our Government is busy experimenting with improvements in poison gas and killing animals at the rate of two a day in the process. It obtained in one year 689 cats, guinea pigs, goats, mice, monkeys, rabbits and rats, and killed 618 of them with poison gas in search of improvements.

"Some idea of the horrors of the next war may be gathered from the fact that the range of guns has been doubled since the Armistice, and that machine guns are now available which fire, 1,500 shots a minute. An automatic cannon will fire one and a quarter pound shells at the rate of 120 a minute, and there is a sixteen-inch gun which hurls a missile weighing more than a ton for a distance of twenty-seven miles. The Chemical Warfare Service in America has discovered a liquid, three drops of which when applied to any part of the skin will cause a man's death. One aeroplane, carrying two tons of this liquid, could kill the whole population over miles of territory. General Swinton of the British Army says: 'The great future weapon of war will be deadly germs. We have since the war discovered and developed germs which, dropped down upon cities and armies, will slaughter a nation in a day.'

"If anyone is ever in danger of becoming unduly optimistic, let him remember that we spent in 1924 forty millions on education, a hundred and twenty-one millions on armaments, and

three hundred and sixteen millions on drink. The business of scientific killing is very expensive, and I am told that nitrogen thrown away in one small and indecisive battle in France would have been enough to save India from a famine. The great world powers are still pouring out an incredible amount of their treasure upon armaments, although history so plainly teaches that increasing armaments do nothing but increase the likelihood of wars. Peace-loving America voted eighty-five million dollars for aviation expansion in a few minutes, and no one took the slightest notice of this forward movement in the race for armaments. The irony of the situation is that, while Great Britain is spending nearly twice as much money on armaments today as she spent in 1913, the victorious nations have relieved Germany of the burden of such expenditure, so that, in competing with her in industry and commerce, they work under a severe handicap of their own creation."

I add to this the following from *The Lancet* (June 18, 1927):

"Since the arrival of the British troops there have been many cases of influenza and pneumonia, but the question of venereal disease has been the most clamant one, and in spite of every possible precaution the number of those affected has steadily increased . . . A number of prostitutes from North and South have flocked to Shanghai, most of them being Chinese (6 per cent), Russians (30 per cent), and Japanese (5 per cent). The majority of the brothels are in the French Concession and in Chinese districts bordering on municipal roads. The high venereal rate has given the Command much concern, and no stone is left unturned in the effort to lower it."

And yet there are intelligent men who talk, and gullible men who subscribe to the talk, of the 'humanizing influence' of war!

Young India, 11-8-1927

28

WAR AGAINST WAR

A correspondent writes:

"My excuse for writing this is that the autobiographical chapter about your attitude towards war as a follower of Truth and *Ahimsa* has apparently stirred the thoughts of many, and abler people would be writing to you about it. But I wish to present some aspects that have struck me. Is it not a fundamental doctrine that to the true discipline of Truth and *Ahimsa* there can be no tampering with bad things even though one cannot resist them? War is a necessary evil as some say, but that is no excuse for supporting it in the hope that after it there will come to the world a realization of the wickedness of waging war. It cannot be. On the contrary, the callousness of man is increased further in intensity and the feeling about the sacredness of life is destroyed. The anarchist could argue just as you do and say: 'We cannot stop European aggression and terrorism. We cannot resist terrorism by mass force. But if we can only demonstrate to them the wickedness of such methods by using these against them, they will see the folly of their attitude and we shall become free, and we shall also save the world from terrorism. So long as *himsa* is resorted to by our rulers and so long as we hate terrorism what is the harm in using these weapons, provided we do not allow them to obsess us?' Has the Great War actually done any good to the nations and particularly to the victors? Materially, morally and socially they have lost heavily as a result of the victory. Their moral standards have all been upset, and the strife after the life of the movement, and the disregard for truth and honesty in international dealings is becoming more and more apparent every day. Can any good come out of a war, however 'righteous' it may be? Are we not bound to oppose it and invite suffering for the cause rather than in any way acquiesce in it either passively or actively? Do you not believe that the pacifists served the cause better than those who actively engaged in the War? What you say might represent the state of your mind in 1914 when you thought there was a sense of justice in the British mentality. Do you now feel that it was right? If another war were declared tomorrow, would you volunteer your help to England in the hope that you would be making things better after the war? I know I have not presented the case in the best way, but you can understand what it is that I am trying to tell you, and I shall be glad to have reply."

I agree with the correspondent that he has not presented his case 'in the best way', but he does represent a type of readers who will not read carefully even writings that are meant to be serious, simply because they happen to be found in a weekly journal. If readers like the correspondent will re-read the chapter in question, they will be able to deduce from it that

1. I did not offer my services because I believed in war. I offered them because I could not avoid participation in it at least indirectly.

2. I had no status to resist participation.

3. I do not believe that war can be avoided by taking part in it, even as I do not believe that evil can be avoided by participation in it. This, however, needs to be distinguished from sincerely helpless participation in many things we hold to be evil or undesirable.

4. The anarchist's argument is irrelevant as his participation in terrorism is deliberate, voluntary and preconceived.

5. The War certainly did not do good to the so-called victors.

6. The pacifist resisters who suffered imprisonment certainly served the cause of peace.

7. If another war were declared tomorrow, I could not, with my present views about the existing Government, assist it in any shape or form; on the contrary I should exert myself to the utmost to induce others to withhold their assistance and to do everything possible and consistent with *Ahimsa* to bring about its defeat.

Young India, 8-3-1928

29

STILL AT IT

The autobiographical chapter dealing with my participation in the last war* continues to puzzle friends and critics. Here is one more letter:

"In Chapter 38, Part IV, of your Autobiography you, for the first time, broached the question of your participation in the war of 1914-1918.

Certain points troubled me, but I waited, anxiously hoping to see the subject more fully developed in the next chapter, as also probably by correspondence.

This has to some extent happened. But still there are two points which have not been elucidated to the extent I had hoped.

I am not writing to you with the idea that you are in the wrong, but with the conviction that I have not been able to grasp your full meaning; and as there must be many others in my position, I am emboldened to ask of you the elucidation for which I long.

The first point is: What actually impelled you to participate in the war? You say 'One of the three courses was open to me: I could declare open resistance against the war and, in accordance with the law of Satyagraha, boycott the Empire until it changed its military policy; or I could seek imprisonment by civil disobedience of such of its laws as were fit to be disobeyed; or I could participate in the war on the side of the Empire and thereby acquire the capacity and the fitness for resisting the violence of war. I lacked this capacity and fitness; so I thought there was nothing for it but for me to serve in the war.'

What capacity and fitness for resisting the violence of the war was it that you hoped to acquire by participating in the war?

I can see that your case was individual and quite different from that of the natives of the various belligerent countries. You were not liable, as they were, to be recruited for active service, and *passive resistance* was not therefore naturally open to you. Then to make public protest against the war, when you had no status with which to back it, would have been worse than

* Chapter 10 in this volume.

useless. But why take on one iota more of *helpless participation* than was absolutely necessary?

Though from the foregoing quotation one gathers that you joined the war in order to acquire the capacity to resist the violence of war, yet in other places you clearly state that you hoped, by your action, to gain some status for yourself and your country—not merely for resisting war—one concludes.

And out of this comes the second question: was it right to join the war with the hope of gaining anything?

I do not know how to reconcile this with the teaching of the Gita which says that we should never act with a view to the fruits of our action.

Throughout the chapter you used the argument of aiding or not aiding the British Empire, and I realize that the question, as originally broached, was an individual one. But it inevitably leads us on to the question: should we or should we not participate in war as war?"

No doubt it was a mixed motive that prompted me to participate in the war. Two things I can recall. Though as an individual I was opposed to war, I had no status for offering effective non-violent resistance. Non-violent resistance can only follow some real disinterested service, some heart-expression of love. For instance, I would have no status to resist a savage offering animal sacrifice until he could recognize in me his friend through some loving act of mine or other means. I do not sit in judgment upon the world for its many misdeeds. Being imperfect myself and needing toleration and charity, I tolerate the world's imperfections till I find or create an opportunity for fruitful expostulation. I felt that, if by sufficient service I could attain the power and the confidence to resist the Empire's wars and its warlike preparations, it would be a good thing for me, who was seeking to enforce non-violence in my own life, to test the extent to which it was possible among the masses.

The other motive was to qualify for Swaraj through the good offices of the statesmen of the Empire. I could not thus qualify myself except through serving the Empire in its life and death struggle. It must be understood that I am writing of my mentality in 1914 when I was a believer in the Empire and its willing ability to help India in her battle for freedom. Had I been the non-violent rebel that I am today, I should certainly not have helped, but through every effort open to non-violence I should have attempted to defeat its purpose.

My opposition to and disbelief in war was as strong then as it is today. But we have to recognize that there are many things in the world which we do although we may be against doing them. I am as much opposed to taking the life of the lowest creature alive as I am to war. But I continually take such life, hoping some day to attain the ability to do without this fratricide. To entitle me, in spite of it, to be called a votary of non-violence, my attempt must be honest, strenuous and unceasing. The conception of *moksha*, absolution from the need to have embodied existence, is based upon the necessity of perfected men and women being completely non-violent. Possession of a body like every other possession necessitates some violence, be it ever so little. The fact is that the path of duty is not always easy to discern amidst claims seeming to conflict one with the other.

Lastly, the verse referred to from the Gita has a double meaning. One is that there should be no selfish purpose behind our actions. That of gaining Swaraj is not selfish purpose. Secondly, to be detached from fruits of actions is not to be ignorant of them, or to disregard or disown them. To be detached is never to abandon action because the contemplated result may not follow. On the contrary, it is proof of immovable faith in the certainty of the contemplated result following in due course.

Young India, 15-3-1928

30

MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS WAR

Rev. B. De Ligt has written in a French journal called *Evolution* a long open letter to me. He has favoured me with a translation of it. The open letter strongly criticises my participation in the Boer War and then the Great War of 1914, and invites me to explain my conduct in the light of *Ahimsa*. Other friends too have put the same question. I have attempted to give the explanation more than once in these columns.

There is no defence for my conduct weighed only in the scales of *Ahimsa*. I draw no distinction between those who wield the weapons of destruction and those who do Red Cross work. Both participate in war and advance its cause. Both are guilty of the crime of war. But even after introspection during all these years, I feel that, in the circumstances in which I found myself, I was bound to adopt the course I did both during the Boer War and the Great European War and for that matter the so-called Zulu 'Rebellion' of Natal in 1906.

Life is governed by a multitude of forces. It would be smooth sailing, if one could determine the course of one's actions only by one general principle whose application at a given moment was too obvious to need even a moment's reflection. But I cannot recall a single act which could be so easily determined.

Being a confirmed war resister I have never given myself training in the use of destructive weapons in spite of opportunities to take such training. It was perhaps thus that I escaped direct destruction of human life. But so long as I lived under a system of government based on force and voluntarily partook of the many facilities and privileges it created for me, I was bound to help that Government to the extent of my ability when it was engaged in a war, unless I non-cooperated with that Government and renounced to the utmost of my capacity the privileges it offered me.

Let me take an illustration. I am a member of an institution which holds a few acres of land whose crops are in imminent peril from monkeys. I believe in the sacredness of all life, and hence I regard it as breach of *Ahimsa* to inflict any

injury on the monkeys. But I do not hesitate to instigate and direct an attack on the monkeys in order to save the crops. I would like to avoid this evil. I can avoid it by leaving or breaking up the institution. I do not do so because I do not expect to be able to find a society where there will be no agriculture and therefore no destruction of some life. In fear and trembling, in humility and penance, I therefore participate in the injury inflicted on the monkeys, hoping some day to find a way out.

Even so did I participate in the three acts of war. I could not, it would be madness for me to, sever my connection with the society to which I belong. And on those three occasions I had no thought of non-cooperating with the British Government. My position regarding that Government is totally different today, and hence I should not voluntarily participate in its war, and I should risk imprisonment and even the gallows, if I was forced to take up arms or otherwise take part in its military operations.

But that still does not solve the riddle. If there was a national Government, whilst I should not take any direct part in any war, I can conceive occasions when it would be my duty to vote for the military training of those who wish to take it. For I know that all its members do not believe in non-violence to the extent I do. It is not possible to make a person or a society non-violent by compulsion.

Non-violence works in a most mysterious manner. Often a man's actions defy analysis in terms of non-violence; equally often his actions may wear the appearance of violence when he is absolutely non-violent in the highest sense of the term and is subsequently found so to be. All I can then claim for my conduct is that it was, in the instances cited, actuated in the interests of non-violence. There was no thought of sordid national or other interest. I do not believe in the promotion of national or any other interest at the sacrifice of some other interest.

I may not carry my argument any further. Language at best is but a poor vehicle for expressing one's thoughts in full. For me non-violence is not a mere philosophical principle. It is the rule and the breath of my life. I know I fail often, sometimes consciously, more often unconsciously. It is a matter

not of the intellect but of the heart. True guidance comes by constant waiting upon God, by utmost humility, self-abnegation, by being ever ready to sacrifice one's self. Its practice requires fearlessness and courage of the highest order. I am painfully aware of my failings.

But the Light within me is steady and clear. There is no escape for any of us save through Truth and non-violence. I know that war is wrong, is an unmitigated evil. I know too that it has got to go. I firmly believe that freedom won through bloodshed or fraud is no freedom. Would that all the acts alleged against me were found to be wholly indefensible rather than that by any act of mine non-violence was held to be compromised or that I was ever thought to be in favour of violence or untruth in any shape or form. Not violence, not untruth, but non-violence, Truth is the law of our being.

Young India, 13-9-1928

31

'WHAT ARE WE TO DO?'

Two weeks ago I wrote in *Navajivan* a note on the tragedy in Godhra, where Shri Purushottam Shah bravely met his death at the hands of his assailants, and gave the note the heading 'Hindu Muslim Fight in Godhra'. Several Hindus did not like the heading and addressed angry letters asking me to correct it. I found it impossible to accede to their demand. Whether there is one victim or more, whether one assumes the offensive and the other simply suffers, I should describe the event as a fight, if the whole series of happenings were the result of a state of war between the two communities. Whether in Godhra or in other places there is today a state of war between the two communities. Fortunately the countryside is still free from the war-fever which is mainly confined to towns and cities where, in some form or other, fighting is continually going on. Even the correspondents who have written to me about Godhra do not seem to deny the fact that the happenings arose out of the communal antagonisms that existed there.

If the correspondents had simply addressed themselves to the heading, I should have satisfied myself with writing to them privately and written nothing in *Navajivan* about it. But there are other letters in which the correspondents have vented their ire on different counts. A volunteer from Ahmedabad who had been to Godhra writes:

> "You say that you must be silent over these quarrels. Why were you not silent over the Khilafat, and why did you exhort us to join the Muslims? Why are you not silent about your principles of *Ahimsa*? How can you justify your silence when the two communities are running at each other's throat and the Hindus are being crushed to atoms? How does *Ahimsa* come there? I invite your attention to two cases:
>
> A Hindu shopkeeper thus complained to me: 'Mussalmans purchase bags of rice from my shop, often never paying for them. I cannot insist on payment for fear of their looting my godowns. I have, therefore, to make an involuntary gift of about 50 to 75 maunds of rice every month.'
>
> Others complained: 'Mussalmans invade our quarters and insult our women in our presence, and we have to sit still. If we dare to raise a protest, we are done for. We dare not even lodge a complaint against them.'
>
> What would you advise in such cases? How would you bring your *Ahimsa* into play? Or even here would you prefer to remain silent?"

These and similar questions have been answered in these pages over and over again, but as they are still raised, I had better explain my views once more at the risk of repetition.

Ahimsa is not the way of the timid or the cowardly. It is the way of the brave ready to face death. He who perishes sword in hand is no doubt brave, but he who faces death without raising his little finger and without flinching is braver. But he who surrenders his rice bags for fear of being beaten is a coward and no votary of *Ahimsa*. He is innocent of *Ahimsa*. He who, for fear of being beaten, suffers the women of his household to be insulted, is not manly but just the reverse. He is fit to be neither a husband nor a father nor a brother. Such people have no right to complain.

These cases have nothing to do with the inveterate enmity between the Hindus and Mussalmans. Where there are fools there are bound to be knaves, where there are cowards there are bound to be bullies, whether they are Hindus or Mussalmans.

Such cases used to happen even before the outbreak of these communal hostilities. The question here, therefore, is not how to teach one of the two communities a lesson or how to humanize it, but how to teach a coward to be brave.

If the thinking sections of both the communities realize the cowardice and folly at the back of the hostilities, we can easily end them. Both have to be brave, both have to be wise. If both or either deliberately get wise, theirs will be the way of non-violence. If both fight and learn wisdom only by bitter experience, the way will be one of violence. Either way there is no room for cowards in a society of men, i.e., in a society which loves freedom. Swaraj is not for cowards.

It is idle, therefore, to denounce *Ahimsa* or to be angry with me on the strength of the cases cited. Ever since my experience of the distortion of *Ahimsa* in Bettiah in 1921 I have been repeating over and over again that he who cannot protect himself or his nearest and dearest or their honour by non-violently facing death, may and ought to do so by violently dealing with the oppressor. He who can do neither of the two is a burden. He has no business to be the head of a family. He must either hide himself, or must rest content to live for ever in helplessness and be prepared to crawl like a worm at the bidding of a bully.

I know only one way—the way of *Ahimsa*. The way of *himsa* goes against my grain. I do not want to cultivate the power to inculcate *himsa*. As *Ahimsa* has no place in the atmosphere of cowardice prevailing today, I must needs be reticent over the riots we hear of from day to day. This exhibition of my helplessness cannot be to my liking. But God never ordains that only things that we like should happen and things that we do not like should not happen. In spite of the helplessness, the faith sustains me that He is the Help of the helpless, that He comes to one's succour only when one throws himself on His mercy. It is because of this faith that I cherish the hope that God will one day show me a path which I may confidently commend to the people. With me the conviction is as strong as ever that willynilly Hindus and Mussalmans must be friends one day. No one can say how and when that will happen. The future is entirely in the hands of God. But He has vouchsafed

to us the ship of Faith which alone can enable us to cross the ocean of Doubt.

Young India, 11-10-1928

32

'MY ATTITUDE TOWARDS WAR'

My article under the above heading published in *Young India*, 13th September 1928, has given rise to much correspondence with me and in the European press that is interested in war against war. In the personal correspondence there is a letter from Tolstoy's friend and follower, V. Tcherkoff, which, coming as it does from one who commands great respect among lovers of peace, the reader will like me to share with him. Here is the letter:

> "Your Russian friends send you their warmest greetings and best wishes for the further success of your devoted service for God and men. With the liveliest interest do we follow your life, the work of your mind, and your activity, and we rejoice at each of your success. We realize that all that you attain in your own country is at the same time also our attainment, for, although under different circumstances, we are serving the one and the same cause. We feel a great gratitude to you for all that you have given and are giving us by your person, the example of your life, and your fruitful social work. We feel the deepest and most joyous spiritual union with you.
>
> But the truer and the deeper is the union, the more acutely one feels the least difference or misunderstanding between us. And it is just such a misunderstanding between us that has elicited my present letter to you.
>
> Your article 'My Attitude Towards War,' printed in *Young India* of the 13th September of this year, has grieved many of your admirers and friends. And I have felt the need of expressing that which I feel and think on this subject. I hope that you will accept my words with the same feeling of goodwill with which they issue from me.
>
> You justify your past participation in three wars waged by the British Government. Alluding to the same subject some years ago you in an article expressed yourself, if I remember right, in another spirit. Then you did not justify yourself, but recognized your former inconsistency. And I remember that this readiness of yours to recognize your past mistake greatly

touched and consoled me and your other friends here. Whereas now, on the contrary, you justify yourself, referring to the usual arguments put forward in defence of war. You say: 'Life is governed by a multitude of forces. It would be smooth sailing, if one could determine the course of one's actions only by one general principle whose application at a given moment was too obvious to need even a moment's reflection.' This is quite correct with regard to all cases which admit of considerations of practical expediency. But there is a category of actions, which owing to their character do not admit of such considerations. They are such actions which for us clearly violate a definitely recognized moral or divine law. To this category of actions belongs the wilful killing of man. In this case the issue should be placed categorically, and one should not allow any considerations of expediency to interfere.

Neither may one solve this question according to whether one sympathizes or not with a given Government. And yet you do so when you say: 'If there was a national Government, I can conceive occasions when it would be my duty to vote for the military training of those who wish to take it.' In this way you justify others who also vote for the preparation for war because they sympathize with another Government. And what a snare is placed in people's way by a man who denies war to such an extent that he refuses to serve in the army and who at the same time votes for military training?

Further you say that 'all its (the Government's) members do not believe in non-violence,' and that 'it is not possible to make a person or a society non-violent by compulsion.' But by abstaining from voting for military training I compel no one to do anything, just as by refraining from voting for training pickpockets I do no violence to pickpockets.

You refer to the example of a harvest eaten by monkeys. But by transferring the case from men to monkeys you obscure it. If your harvest were attacked by men not beasts, would you not deem it your duty to sacrifice the harvest rather than destroy the men?

You say that it would be madness for you to sever your connection with the society to which you belong, and that as long as you lived under a system of government based on force, and voluntarily partook of the many facilities and privileges it created for you, you were bound to help it to the extent of your ability when it was engaged in war.

Firstly, by abstaining from approving those evil deeds which men are engaged in around me I not only do not 'sever my connection with the society to which I belong,' but exactly the opposite. I utilize this connection for the best possible way of serving this society.

Secondly, if living as I live I am obliged to assist the State in waging war, then I ought at all costs to cease to live as I live, even if I had in doing so to sacrifice my life, and in no wise to help people in the slaughter of their brothers. Besides, it is quite possible to make use of certain facilities afforded by the State, which could be obtained without violence, and at the same time to abstain from supporting the evil deeds of the State.

Perhaps the misunderstanding partly arises from your not having sufficiently rigidly drawn the line between *violence* and *killing*. There are cases when it is indeed difficult, without careful consideration, to make clear whether definite violence is being committed. But in the question of war there is no room for doubt as to its being founded on the killing of man. In this we probably agree.

We hope, dear and greatly esteemed friend, that you will recognize the justice of the considerations I have expressed, and that you will give us an explanation that will quiet our misgivings. At all events believe me that I would not have written this letter, had not the passages indicated in your article indeed called forth misgivings among many of your sincere and earnest friends.

In conclusion, I may only reiterate the expression of my deepest regard for you and my warmest good wishes for yourself and your good work."

I need hardly assure M. Tcherkoff that not only do I not resent his letter but I welcome it for its warmth of affection and for its transparent sincerity.

I do not propose to enter into a detailed reply to the points raised in the letter. For me the matter does not admit of reasoning beyond a point. It is one of deep conviction that war is an unmixed evil. I would not yield to anyone in my detestation of war. But conviction is one thing, correct practice is another. The very thing that one war resister may do in the interest of his mission may repel another war resister who may do the exact opposite, and yet both may hold the same view about war. This contradiction arises because of the bewildering complexity of human nature. I can only, therefore, plead for mutual toleration even among professors of the same creed.

Now for some points in the letter. I do not recall the writing or speech in which I expressed repentance for my participation in Britain's wars. What I am likely to have said is that

I was not sorry that I aided Britain though her policy was afterwards discovered by me to have been one fraught with harm to India and danger to humanity. If I had felt remorse for having taken part in the three wars as wars, I should have remembered it and repeated it unless I had changed my opinion about my participation.

Whatever I have done was not done from expedience as we understand the term. I claim to have done every act described by me for the purpose of advancing the cause of peace. That does not mean that those acts really advanced the cause of peace. I am merely stating the fact that my motive was peace.

What is possible, however, is that I was then weak and am still too weak to perceive my error even as a blind man is unable to see what his neighbours are able to see. I observe daily how capable we are of utmost self-deception.

For the time being, however, I am not aware of my self-deception. What I feel is that I am looking at peace through a medium to which my European friends are strangers. I belong to a country which is compulsorily disarmed and has been held under subjection for centuries. My way of looking at peace may be necessarily different from theirs.

Let me take an illustration. Supposing that both cats and mice sincerely desire peace. Now cats will have to adjure war against mice. But how will mice promote peace? What will they abjure? Is their vote even necessary? Suppose further that some cats do not observe that pact arrived at by the assembly of cats and continue preying upon mice, what will mice do? There may be some wise heads among them, and they may say, 'We will offer ourselves a willing sacrifice till the cats are over-satisfied and find no fun in preying.' These will do well to propagate their cult. But what should be their attitude, peace-lovers though they are, towards the mice who would, instead of running away from their oppressors, decide to arm themselves and give battle to the enemy? The effort may be vain, but the wise mice whom I have imagined will, I apprehend, be bound to assist the mice in their desire to become bold and strong even whilst maintaining their attitude of peace. They will do so not out of policy but from the highest of motives. That is exactly my attitude. Non-violence is

not an easy thing to understand, still less to practise, weak as we are. We must all act prayerfully and humbly and continually ask God to open the eyes of our understanding, being ever ready to act according to the light as we receive it. My task as a lover and promoter of peace, therefore, today consists in unflinching devotion to non-violence in the prosecution of the campaign for regaining our liberty. And if India succeeds in so regaining it, it will be the greatest contribution to the world's peace. European war resisters, therefore, may well formulate public opinion in Europe that will compel Britain to retrace her steps and stop the continuing spoliation of India.

Young India, 7-2-1929

33

SWORD v. SPIRIT

A friend sends the following interesting extract from an old number of *My Magazine*:

> "No conqueror ever gained more by wars than did Napoleon, Emperor of the French, who, beginning as a poor Corsican Lieutenant, for a little while dominated Europe, altering boundaries, upsetting thrones. Yet Napoleon knew that it was folly to rely on force. 'There are only two powers in the world,' he said, not after he had been defeated and exiled, but while he appeared to be at the height of his success; 'those powers are the spirit and the sword. In the long run *the sword will always be conquered by the spirit*.'
>
> But why, we may ask, did Napoleon, if he saw so plainly the uselessness of war, continue to make war? Why did he use the sword until it was wrenched out of his hand at Waterloo? Partly because Napoleon, like the rest of us, could not always practise what he preached, but partly because other kings and emperors would not let him alone. They were not as wise as he. When he pleaded for peace they would not believe he was sincere. To the Emperor of Austria after a fierce battle he addressed this personal appeal:
>
> 'Thousands of Frenchmen and Austrians have been killed. The prospect of continuance of such horrors distresses me so greatly that I make a personal appeal to you. Amid grief and surrounded by 15,000 corpses, I implore Your Majesty, I feel bound to give you an urgent warning. You are far from the

scene, your heart cannot be so deeply moved as mine is on the spot.

'Let us give our generation peace and tranquillity. If the men of the later days are such fools as to come to blows, they will learn wisdom after a few years of fighting and will then live at peace with one another.'"

Would that India, which through her Congress has subscribed to the policy of non-violence, will adhere to it and demonstrate to a world groaning under the curse of the sword that the spirit does triumph over the sword in national affairs as it has ever been shown to have triumphed in individual affairs.

Young India, 14-2-1929

34

FOR CONSCIENCE SAKE

Pax International is a monthly journal issued at Geneva, 12 rue de Vieux-College, on behalf of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. I have before me a copy of the November number of this monthly which has the following paragraph:

"In Jugoslavia 72 members of the religious body of Nazarenes have been condemned by the military court of the Save District to 10 years' imprisonment for refusing to take up arms. All of the condemned have already served 5 years' imprisonment for the same offence. All friends of peace in the whole world should protest against these inhuman sentences and demand the revision of the sentence."

It is a remarkable awakening in the Western world, this peace movement. That 10 years' servitude for the mere refusal to take up arms is possible under a system in respect of 72 honourable men who follow the law of love rather than the law of hate which the system promulgates is proof of its barbarity. Whether the world conscience disapproves of these savage sentences or not and whether such disapproval produces an effect on the Jugoslavian Government or not, it is certain that the system must be at its last gasp that needs for its sustenance the infliction of barbarous sentences on innocent and honourable

citizens. I tender my respectful congratulations to the brave Nazarenes whom, let me hope, the conscience of Jugoslavia itself will not allow to lie buried in its goals for 10 long years.

Young India, 14-2-1929

35

WOMEN AND WAR

An effective movement against war is making steady headway in the West, and the women of the West are playing a most important, if not the leading, part in the movement. The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom issued at its conference at Frankfort-on-Main held on January 4th the following telling appeal:

"Formerly war only raged over limited areas; the evil was localized;

Today a war once started spreads everywhere.

Formerly only one area was involved in fear and danger;

Today the whole world is 'Balkanized', fires blaze up from various centres all at once in all parts of the world.

Never has war threatened the world in more terrible form;

Never has war threatened such vast surfaces of the world;

Never has it threatened such innumerable populations as are threatened by modern methods of war.

It is no longer a question of conflicts between mercenaries;

It is no longer a question of battles involving mobilized young men;

Entire peoples are threatened!

Do they know what a new war would be with the methods of destruction offered by science from now on which are every day perfected?

Do they know that the airplanes without pilots, steered by radio and carrying poison gas, bombs and incendiary bombs can, in a few minutes, destroy simultaneously great cities like London, Paris, Berlin?

Do they know that poison gases not only destroy human beings, sometimes like a thunderbolt, sometimes after long and terrible sufferings, but also that they penetrate the depths of the earth and poison water and everything underground?

Do they know that the incendiary bombs can, by chemical combination, produce a temperature of 1,000 degrees which would secure the annihilation of everything which by a miracle might have escaped destruction by gas?

Do they realize that a new war would thus be a war of the *simultaneous extermination of peoples*, and would imperil the whole of civilization?

Now, if the race in armaments continues, leading, as it does, all States to ruin, *nothing can prevent a new conflict from breaking out.*

It is a duty to make known to the masses the extent and gravity of the danger that threatens them.

It is a duty to show them the futility of all the measures of protection against chemical and bacteriological methods of destruction perfected by science for use in war.

Proposals for disarmament have been made since 1927 by the U.S.S.R.

The Pact for the '*Renunciation of War*' has been signed by a large number of States.

The logical conclusion of this renunciation

can only be disarmament.

And it is the only way to avoid fresh wars.

If, with us, you are convinced,

Insure the success of the campaign we have undertaken, by giving us your *moral support* by the help of your name, if you cannot help us in a more active way,

And by material help according to your means."

We are too poor to give any material support. Moreover we are not a nation to take part in any war. Till we come to our own, we shall have to be victims of the war that may come upon the world. But it is possible to render more than moral and material support to the movement, that is by regaining our freedom not by warlike means but by non-violent means. I suggest to the friends of peace for the world that the Congress in 1920 took a tremendous step towards peace when it declared that it would attain her own, namely Swaraj, by non-violent and truthful means. And I am positive that, if we unflinchingly adhere to these means in the prosecution of our goal, we shall have made the largest contribution to the world peace.

Young India, 21-3-1929

36

A COMPLEX PROBLEM

It is not without diffidence that I approach the question raised by Rev. B. de Ligt in his open letter to me with regard to my attitude towards war.* To remain silent at the risk of being misunderstood is an easy way out of the difficult situation I find myself in. To say that I made a mistake in participating in war on the occasions in question would be easier still. But it would be unfriendly not to answer questions put in the friendliest manner; and I must not pretend repentance when I do not feel it. My anxiety to avoid a discussion of the question does not proceed from want of conviction, but it proceeds from the fear that I may not be able to make my meaning clear, and may thus create an impression about my attitude towards war which I do not desire. Often do I find language to be a poor vehicle for expressing some of my fundamental sentiments. I would, therefore, urge Mr. B. de Ligt and other fellow war-resisters not to mind my faulty or incomplete argument and still less to mind my participation in war which they may be unable to reconcile with my professions about war. Let them understand me to be uncompromisingly against all war. If they cannot appreciate my argument, let them impute my participation to unconscious weakness. For I would feel extremely sorry to discover that my action was used by anyone to justify war under certain conditions.

But having said this much I must adhere to the position taken up in the article† which is the subject matter of Mr. B. de Ligt's letter. Let the European war-resisters appreciate one vital difference between them and me. They do not represent exploited nations; I represent the most exploited nation on earth. To use an unflattering comparison, they represent the cat and I represent the mouse. Has a mouse even the sense of non-violence? Is it not a fundamental want with him to strive to offer successful violence before he can be taught to appreciate the virtue, the grandeur, the supremacy, of the law of non-violence—Ahimsa—in the field of war? May it not be necessary

* Given as an appendix.
† See Chapter 30.

for me, as a representative of the mouse tribe, to participate in my principal's desire for wreaking destruction even for the purpose of teaching him the superiority of non-destruction?

Here the analogy of the cat and the mouse ends. The mouse has no capacity in him to alter his nature. A human being, however debased or fallen he may be, has in him the capacity of rising to the greatest height ever attained by any human being irrespective of race or colour. Therefore, even whilst I may go with my countrymen a long way in satisfying their need for preparation for war, I should do so in the fullest hope of weaning them from war and of their seeing one day its utter futility. Let it be remembered that the largest experiment known to history in mass non-violence is being tried by me even as I seem to be lending myself for the purpose of war. For want of skill the experiment may fail. But the war-resister in Europe should strain every nerve to understand and appreciate the phenomenon going on before him in India of the same man trying the bold experiment in non-violence whilst hobnobbing with those who would prepare for war.

It is part of the plan of non-violence that I should share the feelings of my countrymen if I would ever expect to bring them to non-violence. The striking fact is that India including the educated politician is *nolens volens* driven to the belief that non-violence alone will free the masses from the thraldom of centuries. It is true that all have not followed out the logical consequences of non-violence. Who can? In spite of my boast that I know the truth of non-violence and try my best to practise it, I fail often to follow out the logical conclusions of the doctrine. The working of nature's processes in the human breast is mysterious and baffles interpretation.

This I know that, if India comes to her own demonstrably through non-violent means, India will never want to carry a vast army, an equally grand navy, and a grander air force. If her self-consciousness rises to the height necessary to give her a non-violent victory in her fight for freedom, the world values will have changed and most of the paraphernalia of war would be found to be useless. Such an India may be a mere daydream, a childish folly. But such, in my opinion, is undoubtedly the implication of an India becoming free through non-violence.

When that freedom comes, if it ever does, it will have come through a gentlemanly understanding with Great Britain. But then it will not be an imperialistic haughty Britain manoeuvring for world supremacy, but a Britain humbly trying to serve the common end of humanity. India will no longer then be helplessly driven into Britain's wars of exploitation, but hers will be the voice of a powerful nation seeking to keep under restraint all the violent forces of the world.

Whether all these fanciful ideas are ever realized or not, my own life line is cast. I can no longer, in any conceivable circumstance, take part in Britain's wars. And I have already said in these pages that, if India attains (what will be to me so-called) freedom by violent means, she will cease to be a country of my pride; that time will be a time for me of civil death. There can, therefore, never be any question of my participation, direct or indirect, in any war of exploitation by India.

But I have already pointed out in these pages that fellow war-resisters in the West are participants in war even in peace time inasmuch as they pay for the preparations that are being made for it and otherwise sustain governments whose main occupation is such preparation. Again, all activity for stopping war must prove fruitless so long as the causes of war are not understood and radically dealt with. Is not the prime cause of modern wars the inhuman race for exploitation of the so-called weaker races of the earth?

Young India, 9-5-1929

37

THE KELLOGG PACT

"In *Young India* for March 21st was printed an appeal issued at the recent Conference of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, in which occurs the following passage: 'The Pact for the "renunciation of war" has been signed by a large number of States. The logical conclusion of this renunciation can only be disarmament. And it is the only way to avoid fresh war.' It is possible that some of the readers of *Young India* are not fully conversant with the genesis of this Pact, the Kellogg Pact as it is often called, and with its tremendous possibilities. So the following very sketchy outline may not be out of place.

It is the outcome of a movement for the outlawry of war which was begun in the U. S. A. by Mr. S. O. Levinson in 1920, and has been gradually but steadily gaining strength. Senator Borah, a man of exceptional ability and power, has been, so to speak, Mr. Levinson's representative in the U. S. A. Senate, and in 1923 he brought in a resolution of which the general purport was that the U. S. A. should invite all the civilized nations of the world to join her in a universal treaty outlawing war by declaring it an international crime. It was at first hardly treated with any seriousness, but the Outlawry Committee founded by Mr. Levinson was steadily educating public opinion, so that each time Mr. Borah called the attention of the Senate to his resolution, it was treated more seriously, and about three years ago the women peace workers in the U.S.A. saw its possibilities, and began to work for it. About two years ago Mr. Levinson visited Europe, and his scheme was thus brought more prominently to the fore.

In April 1927, M. Briand, the Foreign Secretary for France, speaking at a meeting in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the entrance of the U.S.A. into the War, made a remark to the effect that he would at any time be willing to sign a treaty with the U.S.A., outlawing war between the two countries; and he followed this up in June 1927 with a formal offer to Mr. Kellogg, the Secretary of State to the U.S.A. Mr. Kellogg after some time replied with the suggestion that instead of a bilateral treaty between France and the U.S.A. there should be a multilateral treaty in which all the civilized nations of the world should be invited to join. This, it will be noticed, was in essence the same as Mr. Levinson's scheme. It is not necessary to go into all the correspondence and negotiations on the subject, or into the various exceptions or reservations proposed by the French and British Foreign Ministers,

which would have weakened the treaty considerably, had they been embodied in it. Secretary Kellogg was firm in insisting on the universality of the treaty, and on its freedom from all reservations; and at last on August 27th 1928 it was signed by fifteen States, and within five or six months practically all the States of the world signified their intention of adhering to it.

It consists of only two very brief and simple articles, by the first of which the signatories, in the names of their respective peoples, renounce war as an instrument of national policy; while by the second they agree never to seek a settlement of any dispute, of whatever nature and whatever origin, save by pacific means It thus stands as a clear and unqualified renunciation of war, and whatever reservations were sought to be made are outside it, hence have no binding quality, and are reduced to a mere statement of the interpretation put upon the treaty by the individual statesmen who made them.

Now, while it is quite true that the logical outcome of this renunciation is disarmament, that outcome is not likely to follow very quickly. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that this renunciation for the first time brings disarmament within the realm of possibility. The governments have not sufficient confidence in one another to dare to disarm so long as war is recognized as a legitimate way of settling their disputes, and no student of history can blame them. It is doubtful how far it is even now realized that this treaty has placed war outside the pale of legitimacy; but as that realization grows, the fear and distrust will gradually disappear.

The first thing needed, then, is for the people in every country to realize what their Government has done *in their name*, and to build up a strong enough public opinion to hold the governments to their word. There is little, if any, room for doubt in the minds of those who have followed the history of the Pact that it is the force of public opinion that has brought about its acceptance by practically the whole world. It is for the same force of public opinion to make it an effective reality.

How does all this affect India? Do not her poverty and her subjection make her powerless? I think not. For public opinion belongs to the realm of the mind, and nothing can fetter the mind. To build up the strong united public opinion that is needed will no doubt take time, especially in so vast and diversified a country as this; but the building can be done independently of all political parties and political disabilities; the subject belongs to a higher sphere than these. So now is the time to begin. Let the teachers in the schools and colleges lead the way by seeing that the youths fully understand what this Pact really is, what it involves, and what power it places in the hands of the people. When this knowledge has been

> assimilated by the educated it will in some form permeate the masses of the uneducated, preparing the way for the stand India will take when she has attained her freedom.
>
> It has been objected by some that there is no hope of governments being sincere, or keeping their word, and that the treaty is therefore a mere futile gesture, a "fictitious Peace Pact" (*Young India*, p. 117); the reply is that people can, if they so will, prevent its being so, and make it instead one of the greatest events that have ever happened in human history. If they realize what an opportunity the signing of this Pact gives them, they will assuredly not fail to take advantage of it.—L. E."

I gladly publish L. E.'s contribution, and have no difficulty in agreeing that the Kellogg Pact has great possibilities, the patent insincerity of many signatories notwithstanding. I share to the full the apprehension about the Pact felt by the correspondent whose letter to *Young India* L. E. has mentioned. But this insincerity does not trouble me. My difficulty is as to the suggestion made by L. E. about India's part in promoting peace. India's contribution to peace must, in the nature of things, be different in kind from that of the Western nations. India is not an independent nation. And it may be inferred from her present position that she has not the will to be independent. The parties to the Pact are mostly partners in the exploitation of the peoples of Asia and Africa; India is the most exploited among them all. The Peace Pact, therefore, in substance means a desire to carry on the joint exploitation peacefully. At least that is how the Pact appears to me to be at present. India has never waged war against any nation. She has put up sometimes ill-organized or half-organized resistance in self-defence pure and simple. She has, therefore, not got to develop the will for peace. She has that in abundance, whether she knows it or not. The way she can promote peace is to offer successful resistance to her exploitation by peaceful means. That is to say, she has to achieve her independence, for this year to be known as Dominion Status, by peaceful means. If she can do this, it will be the largest contribution that any single nation will have made towards world peace. If my diagnosis is correct, it will be realized that the teaching such as L. E. wants in the schools can only be ineffective and, what is worse, hypocritical. Even if the teachers can make themselves believe in what they may be called upon to teach, it will find no echo in the hearts of the

boys and girls of their classes, even as a person who has never hurt a fly will fail to understand the meaning of an appeal made to him to will not to spill blood.

Young India, 4-7-1929

38

OUR CHOICE

An American correspondent has sent me a cutting from an old number of *The World Tomorrow* (August, 1928). It is a remarkable article on 'Pacifism and National Security' by John Nevin Sayre, which is worthy of perusal by every patriot. The following opening paragraphs show which way the writer would lead us:

> "Pacifism, first of all, asks people to consider whether national armament can really conduce to security in a civilization which uses the tools of twentieth century science. No matter what may be said for defence by armament in the past, we believe that it is an utterly obsolete and extremely dangerous way of attempting to attain security now. In the world in which we live and in the decades immediately ahead it is open to the double objection of (1) mounting cost, and (2) diminishing effectiveness for defence.
>
> Within the span of forty years, that is within the lifetime of many of my readers, the United States has increased the annual expenditure for its navy from 15 million to 318 million dollars. The last session of Congress passed appropriations which mean that, every time the hands of the clock traverse twenty-four hours, the United States spends 2,000,000 dollars for upkeep of the army and navy. A leading article in *The New York Times*, published in March 1927, was headed, 'War --Man's Greatest Industry'. The writer asserted that 'preparation to be ready for war constitutes what is actually the greatest industry in the world.'
>
> There is also an increasing human cost not measurable in dollars. The machines of war have to be tended by men. The munitions of war have to be manufactured by men, and approach is being made more and more toward the drafting of industry and of whole populations for war service. Once wars were fought by professional armies which constituted but a relatively small part of any people; today military strategists

plan to conscript the activity of the entire man power of a nation. A proposed French law gives power to the State to conscript also the women. Compulsory military training in time of peace and the invasion of schools and colleges by military departments run by the Department of War are requisitioning study time of youth, and tending to regiment youth's thinking. The post office, the newspapers, the radio, the movies, artists, and men of science are in danger of being drawn in to give their support to the building of war's preparedness machine. All this means an increasing cost to human liberty, to freedom of thought and discussion, to the possibility of social advance. It should be fully weighed in estimating the price to be paid for putting over an 'adequate' security programme. Armed preparedness is a huge cost in the present, and for the future it is mounting.

Even worse is the fact that increase of expenditure for armament does not in the modern world purchase increase of security. It may do so, possibly, for a score of years, but the policy is subject to a law of diminishing returns, and leads straight towards a climax of disaster. Senator Borah in discussing 'what is preparedness?' recently called attention to the huge public debts and constantly increasing tax burdens which governments are putting on their peoples throughout the world. 'The things with which governments will have to contend in the future,' he said, 'are the economic distress and political unrest of their own people'. A big armament programme, he warns us, 'will be courting trouble.' It will widen the breach between the citizen and his Government. It will further discourage and exasperate those who already have more than they can bear. It will not be preparedness, for that which accentuates economic distress is unpreparedness."

The fashion nowadays is to take for granted that whatever America and England are doing is good enough for us. But the figures given by the writer of the cost to America of her armament are too terrible to contemplate. War has become a matter of money and resourcefulness in inventing weapons of destruction. It is no longer a matter of personal bravery or endurance. To compass the destruction of men, women and children, it might be enough for me to press a button and drop poison on them in a second.

Do we wish to copy this method of defending ourselves? Even if we do, have we the financial ability? We complain of ever-growing military expenditure. But if we would copy America or England, we would have to increase the burden tenfold.

'Why not, if the thing is worth doing?' asks the critic. The question then is, 'Is it worth doing?' Mr. Sayre answers emphatically and says, 'It is not worth doing for any nation.' I say nothing about our so-called naval or military programme when it is resisted by the Government. The nation cannot be kept on the non-violent path by violence. It must grow from within to the state it may aspire to. The question, therefore, for us to consider is, 'What is our immediate aspiration?' Do we first want to copy the Western nations and then in the dim and distant future, after having gone through the agony, retrace our steps? Or do we want to strike out an original path, or rather retain what to me is our own predominantly peaceful path and therethrough win and assert our freedom?

Here there is no question of compromise with cowardice. Either we train and arm ourselves for destruction, be it in self-defence, and in the process train for suffering too; or we merely prepare ourselves for suffering for defending the country or delivering it from domination. In either case bravery is indispensable. In the first case personal bravery is not of such importance as in the second. In the second case too we shall perhaps never be able to do without violence altogether. But violence then will be subservient to non-violence and will always be a diminishing factor in national life.

At the present moment, though the national creed is one of non-violence, in thought and word at least, we seem to be drifting towards violence. Impatience pervades the atmosphere. We are restrained from violence through our weakness. What is wanted is a deliberate giving up of violence out of strength. To be able to do this requires imagination coupled with a penetrating study of the world drift. Today the superficial glamour of the West dazzles us, and we mistake for progress the giddy dance which engages us from day to day. We refuse to see that it is surely leading us to death. Above all we must recognize that to compete with the Western nations on their terms is to court suicide. Whereas if we realize that notwithstanding the seeming supremacy of violence it is the moral force that governs the universe, we should train for non-violence with the fullest faith in its limitless possibilities. Everybody recognizes that, if a non-violent atmosphere had been maintained in 1922, we could have completely gained our end. Even as it is, we had

a striking demonstration of the efficacy of non-violence, crude though it was, and the substance of Swaraj then gained has never been lost. The paralysing fear that had possessed the nation before the advent of Satyagraha has gone once for all. In my opinion, therefore, non-violence is a matter of patient training. If we are to be saved and are to make a substantial contribution to the world's progress, ours must emphatically and predominantly be the way of peace.

Young India, 22-7-1929

39

MILITARY PROGRAMME

George Joseph has been one of my dearest comrades. When I was having rest in Yeravda, he was editor of *Young India*. Before that at my instance he was editor of the now defunct *Independent*. He had sacrificed a lucrative practice for the sake of the country. He went to gaol for the same cause. He is an earnest and honest worker. He is therefore entitled to a respectful hearing, the more so when such a man differs from you, and rejecting the old recommends with the fervour of a convert the adoption of a new policy. George Joseph has done it. One of his old associates sends a cutting from a newspaper containing Joseph's enunciation of his new policy, and marks it "George Joseph's confession of faith." Another man, an unknown admirer of George Joseph, copies out from the report the whole of his criticism of the khadi programme. He writes in a most distracted mood, and insists that I must take notice of the remarks about khadi.

There is no cause for distraction, grief or alarm. It would be surprising, if, in a great national upheaval, we did not find men honestly recanting old views and enunciating new. Change is a condition of progress. An honest man cannot afford to observe mechanical consistency when the mind revolts against anything as an error. We must therefore patiently try to understand what George Joseph has to say, and not hesitate to accept what appeals to our reason, even though it may mean a sacrifice of some cherished ideal.

It is, I hope, in that spirit that I have endeavoured to study Joseph's speech. He condemns khadi, he is "quite satisfied that the removal of untouchability is not primarily a problem of statesmanship." His programme in one simple sentence is: 'Militarize India.' Here is an extract from the speech:

> "We cannot all become soldiers. There is not enough room for us. But it should be possible for us to set about the idea of training about 5,000 men every year in this presidency in urban units. The men will go to drill two or three times a week, go out to camp three weeks in the year. Such training should be made available not only for the students who are at college but also for men of sufficient social and educational status, the educational standard being the membership of the School Leaving class. If you see in every street such people going about in khaki, there will be a new element in our life. This kind of training would make people to stand straight, to think straight, and to speak straight. It will be a great enrichment of our life."

My experience teaches me differently. I have known men in khaki rolling in gutters instead of standing straight. I have seen a Dyer thinking crooked and speaking not straight but nonsense. I have known a commander-in-chief being unable to think at all, let alone thinking straight. Let those who are enamoured of military training have it by all means; but to suggest it 'as a new constructive programme' betrays impatience and hasty thinking. There is not much danger of 'the new programme' taking root in the Indian soil. Moreover, it is against the new order of things that is coming into being even in the West which has grown weary of the war-god. The military spirit in the West bids fair to kill the very humanity in man and reduce him to the level of the beast. What is wanted and what India has, thank God, learnt in a measure undreamt of before is the spirit of unarmed resistance before which the bayonet runs to rust and gunpowder turns to dust. The vision that Joseph puts before us of an armed government bending a minority to its will by a clatter of arms is a negation of the democratic spirit and progress. If that is the promise of the new programme, we have the armed coercion even now, not indeed of a mere minority but of an overwhelming majority. What we want, I hope, is a government not based on coercion even of a minority, but on its conversion. If it is a change from white military rule to a brown one, we hardly need make any fuss. At any rate

the masses then do not count. They will be subject to the same spoliation as now if not even worse. When George Joseph has lived down his impatience, I know him to be too honest not to retrace his steps and become the fine democrat that, to my great joy, I had discovered him to be on the Madras beach in 1919.

Let us then turn to what he has to say about khadi :

> "As long as I was within the fold of the Congress, the only thing the constructive programme represented was khaddar. removal of untouchability, and in later years prohibition. Now I must frankly tell you that I have come deliberately to the conclusion that not one of these goes to the root of the fundamental need of this nation. Khaddar does not. I think it will not survive the creator of the movement, Gandhiji. I have come to that conclusion because of the fundamental economic defect which is attached to khaddar. It costs far too much to produce and to buy, and is, consequently, unjust to the consumer. Khaddar which costs about a rupee a yard will not stand against the cloth produced by the machine industries costing as. 6. My experience of khaddar is that it results in injustice to the producer also. The women, the spinners, who are at the root of khaddar, working for 10 hours a day, have got to be content with a wage of as. 3. I suggest that an industry based on the payment of as. 3 as wages to the fundamental producer thereof cannot succeed, because it amounts to sweating of labour. The sweating of labour consists essentially in paying to the labourer less than is sufficient for her physical maintenance. It is no answer to say that the country is stricken with famine, that there are millions of people without occupation, and to say that for these as. 3 is better than no income whatever. I refuse to accept that argument. That cannot be an argument which can appeal to any human employer of labour, or any statesman with a forward-looking view, in reference to the affairs of his country. It is no consolation to be told that I shall be right in offering as. 3 wages a day, when I know as a matter of economic necessity that the wages would not be sufficient to maintain the worker, much less her family. That is to my mind the hopeless, ineradicable and inexorable vice that attaches to khaddar. That is why today, in spite of 7 or 8 years of labour by Gandhiji, and in spite of lakhs of money poured like water into the organization of the industry, the production of khaddar is infinitely small compared to the magnitude of the problem that has got to be solved, that is to produce clothing for the whole of India, and to put an end to the importation of Rs. 60 crores worth of cloth every year."

Here George Joseph's impatience for reform has betrayed him into lapse of memory. For he brings no new argument in

support of his summary rejection of khadi, but quotes as facts what he himself used to refute as fallacies. Arguments may be revised on further consideration, but facts may not be unless they are proved to have been false. Khadi as conceived for the use of millions does not cost more than foreign cloth for the simple reason that the millions must, if khadi is to be used by them, be their own manufacturers and consumers. These pages have shown that in Bardoli, Bijolia and several other places khadi is being so manufactured and consumed, even as in millions of homes people cook and eat their own food. It is possible to demonstrate, in terms of metal, that rice or bread cooked in a few factories would cost less than they cost today in the millions of homes. But nobody on that account would dare suggest that the millions should cease to cook and should send their raw rice and wheat to be cooked in centralized factories.

Again it is not true to say that women spinners work ten hours per day. Whatever spinning they do is done during their spare hours, and what they get is not a day's wage but in the majority of cases a substantial addition to their daily earnings from their daily avocation. The earning from spinning is waste turned into wealth and not the price of 'sweated labour' as Joseph puts it. And let me correct Joseph by saying that no spinner even working for 10 hours per day can earn 3 as. per day. Spinning has never been conceived as a full-day occupation. Lastly, it is untrue to say that "lakhs of money have been poured like water into the organization of the industry." No organization on a nationwide scale has been known to cost less in organizing than this has. What is true is that a paltry 25 lakhs have been invested as capital for organizing this great and daily growing cottage industry which brings water to thousands of parched lips. Joseph must think cheap of his countrymen when he prophesies that an organization which employs at least 1,500 willing workers in 1,500 villages, an organization which brings daily relief to nearly 150,000 women, an organization which commands the self-sacrificing labours of a Mithubai Petit, the Naoroji Sisters, of a Banker, a Jamnalal, a Rajagopalachari, and Abbas Tyebji, a Venkatappayya, a Pattabhi, a Gangadharrao, a Vallabhbhai, a Lakshmidas, a Rajendraprasad, a Jairamdas, a Mahadev, a Kripalani, a Satish Chandra Dasgupta, a Suresh Banerji, aye a Jawaharlal, and a host of others, lawyers, doctors,

merchants and laymen too numerous to mention though known to fame, will die after the death of one man. It will be a tragic miracle, if all these men and women find the morning after my death that khadi was a 'huge blunder'.

And the pity of it all is that Joseph does not suggest an alternative. Not even if every educated Indian was dressed in khaki and knew how to shoot straight, would the problem of the growing poverty and the forced partial unemployment of millions of the peasantry be solved without a special programme devised for the purpose. For better or worse khadi is that programme till a better is evolved.

Young India, 19-12-1929

40

DIFFICULTY OF PRACTICE

The reader should read Rev. B. de Ligt's letter printed elsewhere (Appendix). I welcome the letter as of a fellow-seeker in the field of *ahimsa*. It is entitled to respectful consideration. And such friendly discussion leads to a clearer conception of the possibilities and limitations of non-violence.

In spite of the greatest effort to be detached, no man can altogether undo the effect of his environment or of his upbringing. Non-violence of two persons occupying different positions will not outwardly take the same shape. Thus the non-violence of a child towards his father would take the shape of conscious and voluntary submission to his violence when he loses his temper. But if the child has lost his temper, the father's submission to the child's violence would be meaningless. The father would take the child to his bosom and instantaneously sterilize the child's violence. In each case it is of course assumed that the outward act is an expression of the inward intention. One who having retaliation in his breast submits to violence out of policy is not truly non-violent, and may even be a hypocrite if he hides his intention. It should also be remembered that non-violence comes into play only when it comes in contact with violence. One who refrains from violence when there is no

occasion for its exercise is simply un-violent and has no credit for his inaction.

Dominion Status ceasing to be a factor, the points raised from that imaginary event now need not be discussed except to say that the enjoyment by India of Dominion Status would have meant India, then become an equal partner, instead of being ruled by it, dominating the foreign policy of Great Britain.

My general and hearty approval of the Nehru Report must not be taken to mean endorsement of every word of it. My approval need not carry endorsement of the constructive programme for the future governance of free India. My non-violence would not prevent me from fighting my countrymen on the many questions that must arise when India has become free. A mere academic discussion can only hamper the present progress of non-violence. I know, however, that, if I survive the struggle for freedom, I might have to give non-violent battle to my own countrymen, which may be as stubborn as that in which I am now engaged. But the military schemes now being considered by the great Indian leaders are highly likely to appear even to them to be wholly unnecessary, assuming that we have come to our own demonstrably through non-violent means deliberately chosen and used.

My collaboration with my countrymen today is confined to the breaking of our shackles. How we would feel and what we shall do after breaking them is more than they or I know.

It is profitless to speculate whether Tolstoy in my place would have acted differently from me. It is enough for me to give the assurance to my friends in Europe that in no single act of mine have I been consciously guilty of endorsing violence or compromising my creed. Even the seeming endorsement of violent action by my participation on the side of Britain in the Boer War and the Zulu Revolt was a recognition, in the interest of non-violence, of an inevitable situation. That the participation may nevertheless have been due to my weakness or ignorance of the working of the universal law of non-violence is quite possible. Only I had no conviction then, nor have any now, of such weakness or ignorance.

A non-violent man will instinctively prefer direct participation to indirect, in a system which is based on violence and to

which he has to belong without any choice being left to him. I belong to a world which is partly based on violence. If I have only a choice between paying for the army of soldiers to kill my neighbours or to be a soldier myself, I would, as I must, consistently with my creed, enlist as a soldier in the hope of controlling the forces of violence and even of converting my comrades.

National independence is not fiction. It is as necessary as individual independence. But neither, if it is based on non-violence, may ever be a menace to the equal independence of the nation or the individual as the case may be. As with individual and national independence, so with the international. The legal maxim is equally moral: *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedas*. It has been well said the universe is compressed in the atom. There is not one law for the atom and another for the universe.

Young India, 30-1-1930

41

SUPERSTITIONS DIE HARD

Mr. Henry Eaton writes from California:

"I am not a British sympathizer. My ancestors fought to liberate themselves from the British in 1776. But as far as I can see from what I read in the papers it would be more harmful than beneficial if Britain got out of India. I do not mean to infer that India could not govern herself, although I cannot but see that such an attempt would be very arduous at the present time. But if Britain gets out of India, who is going to keep the Russians or any other nation out? Certainly India, from all I can learn of her, has no adequate army to protect herself.

But perhaps you would prefer Russian masters to English. Russia is waiting there at the Khyber pass. Russia understands the East. Her people are a mingling of the occidental and the oriental. But Russia has Western culture. Any relation India could have with her would have to be subordinate. Personally I am not antagonistic to Russia. Her war against Capitalism is the great hope of Western civilization. Here in America, our greatest capitalist, Henry Ford, realizes the inevitability of an equitable distribution of wealth. But Russia as master of

India does not particularly appeal to me. With Russia as master India would lose her identity as a culture. With England India has always retained that identity.

Perhaps you do not fear the Russian menace as much as we of the Western world. In America many of us are sure that once Britain is out of India, Russia will step in. We cannot visualize the India of the present, the India with her caste system and her primitive methods of manufacture and agriculture, defending herself against Western invasion. You have no national organization for protection. There is no unity in India. Unity has been essential to the rise of Western culture and civilization. There also seems to be no progress, as we look on progress in the West, in India. You yourself advocate the return to the old methods of weaving. Have you, with your great intelligence, no realization of the inevitability of change, of moving forward?

You cannot go back from old age to childhood. How then can you go back from enlightened methods of weaving to unenlightened methods and hope to gain anything? While you work in the old way that is hard, you realize that there is a new way that is easy, and you cannot be satisfied with the old hard way. You see how Japan has risen to power by adopting the new way and even China is awakening. India alone seems not to realize the importance of the new ways of the world. How is it that you, her great leader, do not preach progress to your people?

These are two questions that puzzle me greatly: Why does India not realize the Russian menace if she becomes free of England? And why does Mahatma Gandhi not make his people realize that their freedom lies first of all in adopting the new system of labour with the help of machinery? I would very much like to have you, who alone must know the answers, tell them to me.

By birth and heritage I am a citizen of the United States of America, but I take such a personal interest in the affairs of the world that I like to think of myself in my little way as a citizen of the world. At the University I attend here in California, the question of India often arises. The general sympathies are with you against the British. However, as I myself can understand the present situation in India, it seems that of the two evils British control in India is the lesser. The other evil, as I have already tried to explain, is Russian domination. But what we all want to know is how you feel about the matter."

This letter betrays two superstitions. One of them is that India is unfit to govern herself because she cannot defend herself and is torn with internal dissensions. The writer gratui-

tously assumes that, if Britain withdraws, Russia is ready to pounce upon India. This is an insult to Russia. Is Russia's one business to rule over those peoples who are not ruled by Britain? And if Russia has such nefarious designs upon India, does not the writer see that the same power that will oust the British from domination is bound to prevent any other domination? If the control is handed to India's representatives by agreement, there must be some condition whereby Britain will guarantee protection from foreign aggression as a penance for her conscious or unconscious neglect during all these past years to fit India for defending herself.

Personally, even under agreement, I should rely more upon the capacity of the nation to offer civil resistance to any aggressor as it did last year with partial success in the case of the British occupier. Complete success awaits complete assimilation of non-violence in thought, word and deed by the nation. An ocular demonstration of the success of nation-wide Satyagraha must be a prelude to its world-wide acceptance and hence as a natural corollary to the admission of the futility of armament. The only antidote to armament, which is the visible symbol of violence is Satyagraha, the visible symbol of non-violence. But the writer is oppressed also by the fear of our dissensions. In the first place, they are grossly exaggerated in transmission to the West. In the second place, they are hardened during foreign control. Imperial rule means *divide et impera.* They must, therefore, melt with the withdrawal of the frigid foreign rule and the introduction of the warmth-giving sunshine of real freedom . . .

Lastly, I do not subscribe to the belief that everything old is bad. Truth is old and difficult. Untruth has many attractions. But I would gladly go back to the very old Golden Age of Truth. Good old brown bread is any day superior to the pasty white bread which has lost much of its nutritive value in going through the various processes of refinement. The list of old and yet good things can be endlessly multiplied. The spinning wheel is one such thing, at any rate for India.

When India becomes self-supporting, self-reliant, and proof against temptations and exploitation, she will cease to be the object of greedy attraction for any power in the West or the

East, and will then feel secure without having to carry the burden of expensive armament. Her internal economy will be India's strongest bulwark against aggression.

Young India, 2-7-1931

42

WHEN THE BRITISH WITHDRAW

Q. Do you want British control to be withdrawn at once?

A. Certainly. I have never contemplated a gradual process. But that does not mean complete isolation from Great Britain. If Great Britain will have complete partnership, I would treasure it; but it must be a real partnership, no cloak for rulership or guardianship. I know that some of you honestly entertain the fear that there would be anarchy and bloodshed no sooner than the British withdrew from India. Well, if the British so choose, it is up to them to help us out of the mess that they have helped to create. They are responsible for much of the dissensions between different communities, and they are responsible for having emasculated a whole people. And I may confess that we may experience temporary difficulty if you go away at once. But it is open to you to render some assistance, provided that you would consent to remain under our control. But what can conquer your unpardonable pride of race? I would willingly have British soldiers and British officers under our national Government; we would be guided by their advice too; but the final direction of policy must be ours. But even if you withdrew and we were without any disciplined assistance, we have enough faith in our non-violence. I do not think that we will not survive the withdrawal of British power and British assistance both of which are today superimposed on us. With these superimposed I should not feel the glow of freedom. And I wish that we may have an opportunity to fight unto death for freedom, if only to open your eyes. Why is it that you do not ask questions of fitness in respect of the Afghans? We have a culture not inferior to theirs. Or do you think it is difficult to win freedom and enjoy it without an element of savagery in one's nature? Well, if we are a

nation of cowards, the sooner you leave us to our fate the better. It is better that the burden of cowards was removed from this earth. But cowards cannot for ever remain cowards. You do not know what a coward I was when young, and you will agree that I am not quite a coward today. Multiply my example and you will have one whole nation shaking off its cowardice.

Young India, 15-10-1931

43

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF NON-VIOLENCE

The bulk of the questions asked at these meetings centred naturally round non-violence, and I (M.D.) summarize them here, including therein some of the questions and answers at the Paris meeting.

By way of introduction I shall give his (Gandhiji's) distinction between the methods of violence and non-violence: "In the method we are adopting in India, fraud, lying, deceit, and all the ugly brood of violence and untruth have absolutely no room. Everything is done openly and above board, for Truth hates secrecy. The more open you are the more truthful you are likely to be. There is no such thing as defeat or despair in the dictionary of a man who bases his life on Truth and Non-violence. And yet the method of non-violence is not in any shape or form a passive or inactive method. It is essentially an active movement, much more active than the one involving the use of sanguinary weapons. Truth and Non-violence are perhaps the activest forces you have in the world. A man who wields sanguinary weapons and is intent upon destroying those whom he considers his enemies, does at least require some rest, and has to lay down his arms for a while in every twentyfour hours. He is, therefore, essentially inactive, for a certain part of the day. Not so the votary of Truth and Non-Violence, for the simple reason that they are not external weapons. They reside in the human breast, and they are actively working their way whether you are awake or whether you are asleep, whether you are walking leisurely or playing an active game. The

panoplied warrior of Truth and Non-violence is ever and incessantly active."

How then can one be effectively non-violent? By simply refusing to take up arms? Einstein had made the call to the people not to take part in war. Was that enough? — Questions which were raised again and again at various meetings and answered in a language inspired by the audience and the occasion.

About Einstein's call he said with a humour which no one could have mistaken: "My answer can be only one that, if Europe can take up the method enthusiastically, nothing could be better. Indeed, if I may say so about a great man, I would say that Einstein has stolen the method from me. But, if you want me to elaborate the thing, I would say that merely to refuse military service is not enough. To refuse to render military service when the particular time arrives is to do the thing after all the time for combating the evil is practically gone. Military service is only a symptom of the disease which is deeper. I suggest to you that those who are not on the register of military service are equally participating in the crime if they support the State otherwise. He or she who supports a State organized in the military way — whether directly or indirectly — participates in the sin. Each man old or young takes part in the sin by contributing to the maintenance of the State by paying the taxes. That is why I said to myself during the war that, so long as I ate wheat supported by the army whilst I was doing everything short of being a soldier, it was best for me to enlist in the army and be shot; otherwise I should retire to mountains and eat food grown by nature. Therefore all those who want to stop military service can do so by withdrawing all co-operation. Refusal of military service is much more superficial than non-co-operation with the whole system which supports the State. But then one's opposition becomes so swift and so effective that you run the risk of not only being marched to jail, but of being thrown into the streets."

Then may not one accept the non-military services of the State? The statement of the position had moved Pierre Ceresole deeply, and he asked this question in a way which was most touching. "We represent our truth, you represent *the*

truth. The argument is often being advanced here, and we should like to be enlightened by you."

"Now," said Gandhiji, "you have touched the tenderest spot in human nature. I was faced with the very question as author of the non-co-operation movement. I said to myself, there is no State either run by Nero or Mussolini which has not good points about it ; but we have to reject the whole, once we decide to non-co-operate with the system. 'There are in our country grand public roads and palatial educational institutions,' said I to myself, 'but they are part of a system which crushes the nation. I should not have anything to do with them. They are like the fabled snake with a brilliant jewel on its head, but which has fangs full of poison.' So I came to the conclusion that the British rule in India had crushed the spirit of the nation and stunted its growth, and so I decided to deny myself all the privileges — services, courts, titles. The policy would vary with different countries, but sacrifice and self-denial are the essential points. What Einstein has said would occur only once a year and only with very few people. But I suggest it as your first duty to non-co-operate with the State."

But is there not a deep difference between an independent nation and a subject nation ? India may have a fundamental quarrel with an alien government, but how can the Swiss quarrel with the State ?

"Difference there undoubtedly is," said Gandhiji. "As a member of a subject nation I could best help by shaking rid of my subjection. But here I am asked as to how best to get out of a military mentality. You are enjoying the amenities on condition that you render military service to the State. There you have to get State rid of the military mentality."

But Pierre Ceresole still had his doubts. The argument had irresistible appeal for him ; but how did his own particular mission fit in, if he was to pursue the method to its extreme logical conclusions ? A question was asked at the great meeting in Geneva about Gandhiji's opinion regarding the work of the International Red Cross Society organized in Switzerland and the thousands of lives of prisoners that it had saved, and Gandhiji's answer to the question contained for Pierre Ceresole

the solution of all his difficulties and a message of cheer for the International Service that he had organized. "I am ashamed to have to own that I do not know the history of this wonderful and magnificent organization. If it has saved prisoners by the thousands, my head bows before it. But having paid this tribute, may I say that this organization should cease to think of giving relief after the war but think of giving relief *without* the war? If war had no redeeming feature, no courage and heroism behind it, it would be a despicable thing, and would not need speeches to destroy it. But what I would suggest to you is infinitely nobler than war in all its branches including Red Cross organization. Believe me there are many more million prisoners — slaves of their passions and conditions of life, and believe me that there are millions wounded by their own folly, and millions of wrecked homes on the face of the earth. The peace societies of tomorrow would, therefore, have enough work cut out for them when they take up international service, and may Switzerland give the lead to the world in this great task."

In answer to a similar question at another meeting he said: "Non-co-operation in military service and service in non-military matters are not compatible. 'Definitely' military service is an ill-chosen word. You are all the while giving military service by deputy because you are supporting a State which is based on military service. In Transvaal and other countries some are debarred from military service, but they have to pay money to the State. You will have to extend the scope of non-co-operation to your taxes. There is no limit to extending our service to our neighbours across our State-made frontiers. God never made those frontiers."

Q. Since disarmament chiefly depends on great powers, why should Switzerland, which is a small State and a neutral State, be asked to disarm itself?

A. It is from the neutral ground of your country that I am speaking to all other powers and not only to Switzerland. If you won't carry this message to other parts of Europe, I shall be absolved from all blame. And seeing that Switzerland is a neutral territory and a non-aggressive nation, there is all the more reason why Switzerland should not need an army. Secondly, it is through your hospitality and by reason of your occupying the

vantage ground that you have all nationals coming to you. It should be possible for you to give to the world a lesson in disarmament and show that you are brave enough to do without an army.

Q. How could a disarmed neutral country allow other nations to be destroyed? But for our army which was waiting ready at our frontier during the last war we should have been ruined.

A. At the risk of being considered a visionary or a fool I must answer this question in the only manner I know. It would be cowardly of a neutral country to allow an army to devastate a neighbouring country. But there are two ways in common between soldiers of war and soldiers of non-violence, and if I had been a citizen of Switzerland and a President of the Federal State, what I would have done would be to refuse passage to the invading army by refusing all supplies. Secondly, by re-enacting a Thermopylae in Switzerland, you would have presented a living wall of men and women and children, and inviting the invaders to walk over your corpses. You may say that such a thing is beyond human experience and endurance. I say that it is not so. It was quite possible. Last year in Gujarat women stood *lathi* charges unflinchingly, and in Peshawar thousands stood hails of bullets without resorting to violence. Imagine these men and women staying in front of an army requiring a safe passage to another country. The army would be brutal enough to walk over them, you might say. I would then say, you will still have done your duty by allowing yourself to be annihilated. An army that dares to pass over the corpses of innocent men and women would not be able to repeat that experiment. You may, if you wish, refuse to believe in such courage on the part of the masses of men and women, but then you would have to admit that non-violence is made of sterner stuff. It was never conceived as a weapon of the weak, but of the stoutest hearts.

Q. Is it open to a soldier to fire in the air and avoid violence?

A. A soldier, who having enlisted himself flattered himself that he was avoiding violence by shooting in the air, did no credit to his courage or to his creed of non-violence. In my scheme of things such a man would be held to be guilty of un-

truth and cowardice both — cowardice in that in order to escape punishment he enlisted, and untruth in that he enlisted to serve as soldier and did not fire as expected. Such a thing discredits the cause of waging war against war. The war-resisters have to be like Caesar's wife — above suspicion. Their strength lies in absolute adherence to the morality of the question.

M. D.

Young India, 31-12-1931

44

THE GREATEST FORCE

Non-violence is at the root of every one of my activities and therefore also of the three public activities on which I am just now visibly concentrating all my energy. These are untouchability, khadi, and village regeneration in general. Hindu Muslim unity is my fourth love. But so far as any visible manifestation is concerned, I have owned defeat on that score. Let the public, however, not assume therefrom that I am inactive. If not during my lifetime, I know that after my death both Hindus and Mussalmans will bear witness that I had never ceased to yearn after communal peace.

Non-violence to be a creed has to be all-pervasive. I cannot be non-violent about one activity of mine and violent about others. That would be a policy, not a life-force. That being so, I cannot be indifferent about the war that Italy is now waging against Abyssinia. But I have resisted most pressing invitations to express my opinion and give a lead to the country. Self-suppression is often necessary in the interest of Truth and Non-violence. If India had as a nation imbibed the creed of non-violence, corporate or national, I should have had no hesitation in giving a lead. But, in spite of a certain hold I have on the millions of this country, I know the very grave and glaring limitations of that hold. India has an unbroken tradition of non-violence from times immemorial. But at no time in her ancient history, as far as I know it, has it had complete non-violence in action pervading the whole land. Nevertheless, it is my un-

shakable belief that her destiny is to deliver the message of non-violence to mankind. It may take ages to come to fruition. But so far as I can judge, no other country will precede her in the fulfilment of that mission.

Be that as it may, it is seasonable to contemplate the implications of that matchless force. Three concrete questions were, the other day, incidentally asked by friends :

1. What could ill-armed Abyssinia do against well-armed Italy, if she were non-violent ?

2. What could England, the greatest and the most powerful member of the League, do against determined Italy, if she (England) were non-violent in your sense of the term ?

3. What could India do, if she suddenly became non-violent in your sense of the term ?

Before I answer the questions let me lay down five simple axioms of non-violence as I know it:

(a) Non-violence implies as complete self-purification as is humanly possible.

(b) Man for man the strength of non-violence is in exact proportion to the ability, not the will, of the non-violent person to inflict violence.

(c) Non-violence is without exception superior to violence, i.e. the power at the disposal of a non-violent person is always greater than he would have if he was violent.

(d) There is no such thing as defeat in non-violence. The end of violence is surest defeat.

(e) The ultimate end of non-violence is surest victory — if such a term may be used of non-violence. In reality, where there is no sense of defeat, there is no sense of victory.

The foregoing questions may be answered in the light of these axioms.

1. If Abyssinia were non-violent, she would have no arms, would want none. She would make no appeal to the League or any other power for armed intervention. She would never give any cause for complaint. And Italy would find nothing to conquer if Abyssinians would not offer armed resistance, nor would they give co-operation willing or forced. Italian occupa-

tion in that case would mean that of the land without its people. That, however, is not Italy's exact object. She seeks submission of the people of that beautiful land.

2. If Englishmen were as a nation to become non-violent at heart, they would shed imperialism, they would give up the use of arms. The moral force generated by such an act of renunciation would stagger Italy into willing surrender of her designs. England would then be a living embodiment of the axioms I have laid down. The effect of such conversion would mean the greatest miracle of all ages. And yet if non-violence is not an idle dream, some such thing has some day to come to pass somewhere. I live in that faith.

3. The last question may be answered thus. As I have said, India as a nation is not non-violent in the full sense of the term. Neither has she any capacity for offering violence — not because she has no arms. Physical possession of arms is the least necessity of the brave. Her non-violence is that of the weak; she betrays her weakness in many of her daily acts. She appears before the world today as a decaying nation. I mean here not in the mere political sense but essentially in the non-violent, moral sense. She lacks the ability to offer physical resistance. She has no consciousness of strength. She is conscious only of her weakness. If she were otherwise, there would be no communal problems, nor political. If she were non-violent in the consciousness of her strength, Englishmen would lose their role of distrustful conquerors. We may talk politically as we like and often legitimately blame the English rulers. But if we, as Indians, could but for a moment visualize ourselves as a strong people disdaining to strike, we should cease to fear Englishmen whether as soldiers, traders or administrators, and they to distrust us. Therefore, if we became truly non-violent, we should carry Englishmen with us in all we might do. In other words, we being millions would be the greatest moral force in the world, and Italy would listen to our friendly word.

The reader has, I hope, by now perceived that my argument is but a feeble and clumsy attempt to prove my axioms which to be such must be self-proved.

Till my eyes of geometrical understanding had been opened, my brain was swimming as I read and re-read the twelve axioms

of Euclid. After the opening of my eyes geometry seemed to be the easiest science to learn. Much more so is the case with non-violence. It is a matter of faith and experience, not of argument, beyond a point. So long as the world refuses to believe, she must await a miracle, i.e. an ocular demonstration of non-violence on a mass scale. They say this is against human nature — non-violence is only for the individual. If so, where is the difference in kind between man and beast ?

Harijan, 12-10-1935

45

A TALK ON NON-VIOLENCE

Now the talk centered on a discussion which was the main thing that had drawn the distinguished members to Gandhiji.

" Is non-violence from your point of view a form of direct action ? " inquired Dr. Thurman. " It is not one form, it is the only form," said Gandhiji. " I do not of course confine the words 'direct action' to their technical meaning. But without a direct active expression of it, non-violence to my mind is meaningless. It is the greatest and the activest force in the world. One cannot be passively non-violent. In fact 'non-violence' is a term I had to coin in order to bring out the root meaning of *ahimsa*. In spite of the negative particle 'non,' it is no negative force. Superficially we are surrounded in life by strife and bloodshed, life living upon life. But some great seer, who ages ago penetrated the centre of truth, said : It is not through strife and violence but through non-violence that man can fulfil his destiny and his duty to his fellow creatures. It is a force which is more positive than electricity, and more powerful than even ether. At the centre of non-violence is a force which is self-acting. *Ahimsa* means ' love ' in the Pauline sense, and yet something more than the 'love' defined by St. Paul, although I know St. Paul's beautiful definition is good enough for all practical purposes. *Ahimsa* includes the whole creation, and not only human. Besides ' love ' in the English language has other connotations, and so I was compelled to use the negative word. But it does not, as I have told you, express a negative force, but a force superior to

all the forces put together. One person who can express *ahimsa* in life exercises a force superior to all the forces of brutality.

Q. And is it possible for any individual to achieve this ?

Gandhiji : Certainly. If there was any exclusiveness about it, I should reject it at once.

Q. Is any idea of possession foreign to it ?

Gandhiji : Yes. It possesses nothing, therefore it possesses everything.

Q. Is it possible for a single human being to resist the persistent invasion of the quality successfully ?

Gandhiji : It is possible. Perhaps your question is more universal than you mean. Isn't it possible, you mean to ask, for one single Indian, for instance, to resist the exploitation of 300 million Indians ? Or do you mean the onslaught of the whole world against a single individual personally ?

Dr. Thurman : Yes, that is one half of the question. I wanted to know if one man can hold the whole violence at bay.

Gandhiji : If he cannot, you must take it that he is not a true representative of *ahimsa*. Supposing I cannot produce a single instance in life of a man who truly converted his adversary, I would then say that it is because no one had yet been found to express *ahimsa* in its fulness.

Q. Then it overrides all other forces ?

Gandhiji : Yes, it is the only true force in life.

"Forgive now the weakness of this question," said Dr. Thurman, who was absolutely absorbed in the discussion. "Forgive the weakness, but may I ask how are we to train individuals or communities in this difficult art ?"

Gandhiji : There is no royal road, except through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon. Of course, the expression in one's own life presupposes great study, tremendous perseverance, and thorough cleansing of one's self of all the impurities. If for mastering of the physical sciences you have to devote a whole lifetime, how many lifetimes may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known ? But why worry even if it means several lifetimes ? For, if this is the only permanent thing in life, if this is the only

thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent. Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else shall be added unto you. The Kingdom of Heaven is *ahimsa*.

Mrs. Truman had restrained herself until now. But she could not go away without asking the question with which, she knew, she would be confronted any day. "How am I to act, supposing my own brother was lynched before my very eyes?"

"There is such a thing as self-immolation," said Gandhiji. "Supposing I was a Negro, and my sister was ravished by a White or lynched by a whole community, what would be my duty?—I ask myself. And the answer comes to me: I must not wish ill to these, but neither must I co-operate with them. It may be that ordinarily I depend on the lynching community for my livelihood. I refuse to co-operate with them, refuse even to touch the food that comes from them, and I refuse to co-operate with even my brother Negroes who tolerate the wrong. That is the self-immolation I mean. I have often in my life resorted to the plan. Of course a mechanical act of starvation will mean nothing. One's faith must remain undimmed whilst life ebbs out minute by minute. But I am a very poor specimen of the practice of non-violence, and my answer may not convince you. But I am striving very hard, and even if I do not succeed fully in this life, my faith will not diminish."

Mrs. Thurman is a soulful singer, and Dr. Thurman would not think of going away without leaving with us something to treasure in our memory. We sat enraptured as she gave us the two famous Negro spirituals—'Were you there, when they crucified my Lord', and 'We are climbing Jacob's ladder'—which last suited the guests and hosts equally, as it gave expression to the deep-seated hope and aspiration in the breast of every oppressed community to climb higher and higher until the goal was won.

And now came the parting. "We want you to come to America," said the guests with an insistence, the depth of love behind which could be measured as Mrs. Thurman reinforced the request with these words: "We want you not for White America, but for the Negroes; we have many a problem that cries for solution, and we need you badly." "How I wish I

could," said Gandhiji. "But I would have nothing to give you unless I had given an ocular demonstration here of all that I have been saying. I must make good the message here before I bring it to you. I do not say that I am defeated, but I have still to perfect myself. You may be sure that the moment I feel the call within me I shall not hesitate."

Dr. Thurman explained that the Negroes were ready to receive the message. "Much of the peculiar background of our own life in America is our own interpretation of the Christian religion. When one goes through the pages of the hundreds of Negro spirituals, striking things are brought to my mind which remind me of all that you have told us today."

"Well," said Gandhiji, bidding good-bye to them, "if it comes true, it may be through the Negroes that the unadulterated message of non-violence will be delivered to the world."

Harijan, 14-3-1936 M. D.

46

THE DOOM OF PEACE

[Gandhiji's message cabled to the Editor of *The Cosmopolitan*, New York, at the commencement of the Italian invasion.]

Not to believe in the possibility of permanent peace is to disbelieve in godliness of human nature. Methods hitherto adopted have failed because rock-bottom sincerity on the part of those who have striven has been lacking. Not that they have realized this lack. Peace is unattainable by part performance of conditions, even as chemical combination is impossible without complete fulfilment of conditions of attainment thereof. If recognized leaders of mankind who have control over engines of destruction were wholly to renounce their use with full knowledge of implications, permanent peace can be obtained. This is clearly impossible without the great powers of the earth renouncing their imperialistic designs. This again seems impossible without these great nations ceasing to believe in soul-destroying competition and to desire to multiply wants and therefore increase their material possessions. It is my conviction that the root of

the evil is want of a living faith in a living God. It is a first-class human tragedy that peoples of the earth who claim to believe in the message of Jesus whom they describe as the Prince of Peace show little of that belief in actual practice. It is painful to see sincere Christian divines limiting the scope of Jesus's message to select individuals. I have been taught from my childhood, and I have tested the truth by experience, that primary virtues of mankind are possible of cultivation by the meanest of the human species. It is this undoubted universal possibility that distinguishes the human from the rest of God's creation. If even one great nation were unconditionally to perform the supreme act of renunciation, many of us would see in our lifetime visible peace established on earth.

Harijan, 16-5-1936

47

GOD OF LOVE, NOT WAR

The Statesman of Delhi has devoted four articles to an unmeasured condemnation of the no-war movement led by Canon Sheppard and other earnest Christians in England. The paper has dragged into its support the authority of the Bhagavadgita in these words:

> "Indeed the true but difficult teaching of Christianity seems to be that society must fight its enemies but love them.
>
> Such, too, — will Mr. Gandhi please note — is the clear teaching of the Bhagavadgita, where Krishna tells Arjuna that victory also goes to him who fights with complete fearlessness and is utterly devoid of hatred. Indeed, on the highest plane the argument between the conscientious objector and the knightly warrior is for ever settled in the second book of that great classic. We have little space to quote, and the whole poem deserves to be read not once but many times."

The writer of the articles perhaps does not know that the terrorist has also used in his defence the very verses quoted by him. But the fact is that a dispassionate reading of the Bhagavadgita has revealed to me a meaning wholly contrary to the one given to it by *The Statesman* writer. He has forgotten that Arjuna was no conscientious objector in the sense the Western war-resisters are. Arjuna believed in war. He had fought the

Kaurava hosts many times before. But he was unnerved when the two armies were drawn up in battle array and when he suddenly realized that he had to fight his nearest kinsmen and revered teachers. It was not love of man or the hatred of war that had actuated the questioner. Krishna could give no other answer than he did. The immortal author of the Mahabharata, of which the Gita is one — no doubt the brightest — of the many gems contained in that literary mine, has shown to the world the futility of war by giving the victors an empty glory, leaving but seven victors alive out of millions said to have been engaged in the fight in which unnamable atrocities were used on either side. But the Mahabharata has a better message even than the demonstration of war as a delusion and folly. It is the spiritual history of man considered as an immortal being and has used with a magnifying lens a historical episode considered in his times of moment for the tiny world round him, but in terms of present-day values of no significance. In those days the globe had not shrunk to a pinhead, as it has today, on which the slightest movement on one spot affects the whole. The Mahabharata depicts for all time the eternal struggle that goes on daily between the forces of good and evil in the human breast and in which though good is ever victorious evil does put up a brave show and baffles even the keenest conscience. It shows also the only way to right action.

But whatever the true message of the Bhagavadgita may be, what matters to the leaders of the peace movement is not what the Gita says but what the Bible, which is their spiritual dictionary, says, and then too not what meaning the Church authorities give to it, but what meaning a prayerful reading of it yields to the reader. What matters most of all is the objectors' knowledge of the implications of the law of love or *ahimsa*, inadequately rendered in English as non-violence. The articles of *The Statesman* are perhaps a fair challenge to the objectors. I am sorry I do not know enough of the movement to give a definite opinion. My opinion need have no weight whatsoever with the objectors. But it has, inasmuch as I know intimately some of them who even correspond with me. And now they have gone a step further in that they have adopted almost as their text-book Mr. Richard Gregg's book called *The Power of Non-violence* which is claimed by its author to be a Western inter-

pretation of what non-violence as I interpret it stands for. It may not, therefore, be presumptuous on my part, if I set down without argument the implications and conditions of the success of non-violence. Here they are:

(1) Non-violence is the law of the human race and is infinitely greater than and superior to brute force.

(2) In the last resort it does not avail to those who do not possess a living faith in the God of Love.

(3) Non-violence affords the fullest protection to one's self-respect and sense of honour, but not always to possession of land or movable property, though its habitual practice does prove a better bulwark than the possession of armed men to defend them. Non-violence, in the very nature of things, is of no assistance in the defence of ill-gotten gains and immoral acts.

(4) Individuals or nations who would practise non-violence must be prepared to sacrifice (nations to the last man) their all except honour. It is, therefore, inconsistent with the possession of other people's countries, i.e., modern imperialism, which is frankly based on force for its defence.

(5) Non-violence is a power which can be wielded equally by all — children, young men and women or grown-up people, provided they have a living faith in the God of Love and have therefore equal love for all mankind. When non-violence is accepted as the law of life it must pervade the whole being and not be applied to isolated acts.

(6) It is a profound error to suppose that whilst the law is good enough for individuals it is not for masses of mankind.

Harijan, 5-9-1936

48

THE LAW OF OUR BEING

The Statesman has devoted a reasoned article to the argument advanced by me in reply to its criticism of Canon Sheppard's war against war. In that article a very clever attempt has been made to dispute the whole of the position taken up by me.

The writer says that whilst the Bhagavadgita assists him, it does not assist the terrorist. Once you admit the lawfulness of the use of physical force for purposes other than the benefit of the person against whom it is used as in the case of a surgeon against his patient, you cannot draw an arbitrary line of distinction. The Mahabharata, of which the Gita is only a tiny chapter, describes in gruesome detail a night slaughter of the innocents which, but for our recent experiences of our civilized war, would be considered unbelievable in actual practice. The grim fact is that the terrorists have, in absolute honesty, earnestness and with cogency, used the Gita, which some of them knew by heart, in defence of their doctrine and policy. Only they have no answer to my interpretation of the Gita, except to say that mine is wrong and theirs is right. Time alone will show whose is right. The Gita is not a theoretical treatise. It is a living but silent guide whose directions one has to understand by patient striving.

The Statesman writer next likens Canon Sheppard's position to that of Arjuna. Surely this is a faulty analogy, hastily drawn. Arjuna was the commander-in-chief of the Pandava forces. He became suddenly paralysed when he contemplated the awful scene before him. As general he knew exactly what he had to do. He knew that he had to war against his cousins. His paralysis was due to momentary weakness. He could not have given up the task before him without creating the utmost confusion and disorder, and bringing disgrace on himself and his innumerable friends and followers. He was bound to engage himself and his followers in the terrible slaughter for which he had trained himself and them. It is profitless to conjecture what would have happened if non-violence in thought, word and deed had suddenly but really possessed him.

That rich possession, let us hope, has come to Dick Sheppard and his companions. Anyway, so far as I know, his position is wholly different from Arjuna's. He is no general of any army drawn up in battle array. He makes no distinction between kinsmen and others. For him man is man, no matter where he is born, or what his skin is, or what he calls himself. After having prayerfully searched through the book which for him is the Book of Life, he has been driven to the conclusion that he may not hurt his fellow-men for gain for himself or his country, and that therefore he must himself abstain from participation, direct or indirect, in war. He naturally takes the next step of preaching to his neighbours the doctrine of peace or love and goodwill towards men without exception. This is a position which Arjuna never took up.

But *The Statesman* writer has many strings to his bow. And the strongest is his denial of non-violence or love as the law of the human race. If love or non-violence be not the law of our being, the whole of my argument falls to pieces, and there is no escape from a periodical recrudescence of war, each succeeding one outdoing the preceding one in ferocity. I cannot undertake, and least of all through a newspaper article written during moments snatched from the daily routine, to prove that love is the source and end of life. But I venture to make some relevant suggestions which may pave the way for an understanding of the law. All the teachers that ever lived have preached that law with more or less vigour. If love was not the law of life, life would not have persisted in the midst of death. Life is a perpetual triumph over the grave. If there is a fundamental distinction between man and beast, it is the former's progressive recognition of the law and its application in practice to his own personal life. All the saints of the world, ancient and modern, were, each according to his light and capacity, a living illustration of that supreme Law of our Being. That the brute in us seems so often to gain an easy triumph is true enough. That, however, does not disprove the law. It shows the difficulty of practice. How should it be otherwise with a law which is as high as Truth itself? When the practice of the law becomes universal, God will reign on earth as He does in heaven. I need not be reminded that earth and heaven are in us. We know the earth, we are strangers to the heaven within us. If

it is allowed that for some the practice of love is possible, it is arrogance not to allow even the possibility of its practice in all the others. Not very remote ancestors of ours indulged in cannibalism and many other practices which we would today call loathsome. No doubt in those days too there were Dick Sheppards who must have been laughed at and possibly pilloried for preaching the (to them) strange doctrine of refusing to eat fellowmen. Modern science is replete with illustrations of the seemingly impossible having become possible within living memory. But victories of physical science would be nothing against the victory of the Science of Life, which is summed up in love which is the Law of our Being. I know that it cannot be proved by argument. It shall be proved by persons living it in their lives in utter disregard of consequences to themselves. There is no real gain without sacrifice. And since demonstration of the Law of Love is the realest gain, sacrifice too must be the greatest required.

The rest of the argument advanced by *The Statesman* writer in refutation of mine needs no answer, if the law is recognized. His argument is valid, if the law is denied or doubted.

One point may, however, be dealt with in passing. The writer seems to pooh-pooh the idea of honour derived from individual and national gain. He says: "What is this honour that would be left to a nation that voluntarily destroyed itself ?" There is no question for one of self-destruction, voluntary or otherwise. But there is of "a nation allowing itself to be destroyed" for the sake of preserving its honour, as would be a case, say, if Indians died to a man, without lifting a finger, in their determination not to surrender to the will of an invading host. A woman defends her own honour and that of her sex, when she non-violently refuses to the point of death the advances of a rake. Young Prahlad non-violently risked his life to defend his honour, which consisted in his persistence in declaring his belief in God. Jesus defended his honour and that of man when he preferred the death of a felon to the denial of his faith.

Harijan, 26-9-1936

49

TEACHING OF HINDUISM

Referring to my recent articles on the English peace movement led by Canon Sheppard, a friend writes:

> "I hold the view that independently of the context of the Gita and the preliminary conversation between Arjuna and Shri Krishna, Hinduism does not stand decisively for non-violence in regard to organized invasion. It would be straining too much to interpret all our best scriptures in this way. Hinduism no doubt holds the spirit of compassion and love as the very highest duty for man. But it does not preach what you or the pacifists preach, and it is no good straining everything into an allegory for this object."

I have admitted in my introduction to the Gita known as *Anasakti Yoga* that it is not a treatise on non-violence nor was it written to condemn war. Hinduism, as it is practised today or has even been known to have ever been practised, has certainly not condemned war as I do. What, however, I have done is to put a new but natural and logical interpretation upon the whole teaching of the Gita and the spirit of Hinduism. Hinduism, not to speak of other religions, is ever evolving. It has no one scripture like the Quran or the Bible. Its scriptures are also evolving and suffering addition. The Gita itself is an instance in point. It has given a new meaning to *karma*, *sannyasa*, *yajna*, etc. It has breathed new life into Hinduism. It has given an original rule of conduct. Not that what the Gita has given was not implied in the previous writings, but the Gita put these implications in a concrete shape. I have endeavoured, in the light of a prayerful study of the other faiths of the world and, what is more, in the light of my own experiences in trying to live the teaching of Hinduism as interpreted in the Gita, to give an extended but in no way strained meaning to Hinduism, not as buried in its ample scriptures, but as a living faith speaking like a mother to her aching child. What I have done is perfectly historical. I have followed in the footsteps of our forefathers. At one time they sacrificed animals to propitiate angry gods. Their descendants, but our less remote ancestors, read a different meaning into the word 'sacrifice', and they taught that

sacrifice was meant to be of our baser self, to please not angry gods but the one living God within. I hold that the logical outcome of the teaching of the Gita is decidedly for peace at the price of life itself. It is the highest aspiration of the human species.

The Mahabharata and Ramayana, the two books that millions of Hindus know and regard as their guides, are undoubtedly allegories as the internal evidence shows. That they most probably deal with historical figures does not affect my proposition. Each epic describes the eternal duel that goes on between the forces of darkness and of light. Anyway I must disclaim any intention of straining the meaning of Hinduism or the Gita to suit any preconceived notions of mine. My notions were an outcome of a study of the Gita, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishads, etc.

Harijan, 3-10-1936

50

AHIMSA CONUNDRUMS

A college professor and two representatives of a class of fifty students write :

"As you are no doubt aware, the Intermediate prose text book, Pearce and Aryatna's *Models of Comparative Prose*, used in most Intermediate Colleges in India this year, contains a selection about five pages long from your book *The story of My Experiments with Truth*. The selection is entitled 'Ahimsa', and contains your discussion of this most challenging principle and its application to our lives.

The fifty students in my prose class, and I, their instructor, have been spending several class periods studying and discussing the above essay. Naturally it has been a fruitful and stimulating topic, particularly for Indian students who are genuinely interested in their country's welfare and future progress. In general, we heartily agreed with your exposition of *ahimsa*, and felt impelled to incorporate this difficult but splendid principle into our lives.

At one point, however, both the students and I, their instructor, have been unable clearly to understand the precise

nature of your views. I refer to your statement about the conduct of a votary of *ahimsa* in case of war, particularly the following passage: 'When two nations are fighting, the duty of a votary of *ahimsa* is to stop the war. He who is not equal to that duty, he who has no power of resisting war, he who is not qualified to resist war, may take part in war and yet wholeheartedly try to free himself, his nation, and the world from war.' A little further on (discussing three methods of recourse in case of the European War, for yourself): '. . . Or I could participate in the war on the side of the Empire and thereby acquire the capacity and fitness for resisting the violence of war. I lacked this capacity and fitness, so I thought there was nothing for it but for me to serve in the war.'

We should be deeply and humbly grateful, if you would expand and clarify this subject and your past and present views upon it, for the students of my class feel that they might soon have to decide what their attitude toward an approaching conflict might correctly be: whether they can adopt *ahimsa* and yet conscientiously — for any reason whatsoever — take part in war.

I trust that you will find it convenient to answer and set at peace the hearts of fifty eager students and their equally interested instructor."

I do not know that I need have suppressed the name of the college or the names of the signatories. The learned professor has sent me a stamped envelop for answer. This presumes a personal reply. But I have only limited time at my disposal, especially when I am nursing two precious patients. I would not miss my weekly talk with the readers of *Harijan*. I am therefore, with apologies to my correspondent, combining two purposes to save my time.

The question raised in the letter is of very great importance and has always caused me the greatest difficulty, not much in deciding upon the action to be taken at a given moment but in justifying my conduct in terms of *ahimsa*. For the same action may outwardly be taken by the believer and the unbeliever. At these times the motive alone decides its quality.

At the time of writing I have neither the text book nor the original in Gujarati of which the text is a translation. But I have a recollection of what I wrote. What is more, so far as I am aware, my views on *ahimsa* as I held them remain the same today.

The general proposition that I laid down in the quotation was derived from my conduct during the European War. I had thrown myself whole-heartedly into it at the peril of my life — not because of the risks attendant upon serving at such times, but because at the time I was attending drills and camps I was suffering from pleurisy and general weakness, as I had hardly regained the strength I had lost during an exhausting fourteen days' fast I had undertaken two or three months before the War. I believed then the British Empire to be on the whole a system beneficial to humanity. I had dreamt of one day converting it to methods of peace instead of war for the sake even of its own existence though in another form. But I was fully conscious of my limitations. I was an insignificant atom ineffective for resistance to its general policy. Whether I joined the war or not, I was helplessly party to it inasmuch as I ate the food protected by the British fleet. I was enjoying personal liberty too under its protection. If, therefore, I helped the War somehow or other, I felt that for me as a votary of *ahimsa* it was better to take a direct part in it so as to enable me the sooner to end war. It is quite possible that all this was argument of the weak and that, if I felt that war was an evil, I should have gone away from it even if it meant starvation or a rebel's death. Anyway I did not think so then, nor do I now.

It is wholly beside the argument what my attitude would now be, seeing that I no longer believe in the empire as on the whole a beneficent power.

To illustrate my answer let me take another argument from my own life. Even when I was a little urchin my heart and intellect rebelled against untouchability. But being then an insignificant member of the family I acquiesced in their conduct towards Harijans, which I should not do now. Needless to say, I could not then have argued out my conduct. My personal belief did not appear to me to be inconsistent with my living in the family.

Indeed life is made of such compromises. *Ahimsa*, simply because it is purest, unselfish love, often demands such compromises. The conditions are imperative. There should be no self in one's action, no fear, no untruth, and it must be in furtherance

of the cause of *ahimsa*. The compromise must be natural to oneself, not imposed from without.

I should not at all wonder if my answer has given no satisfaction to the professor and his pupils. I must be pardoned for the constant reference to my own actions. The reason is obvious. I am not a well-read man in any sense of the term. All I know of *ahimsa* is in the first instance derived from my own experiences and experiments carried on in broad daylight in a humble scientific spirit and in the fear of God which is Truth.

Harijan, 17-10-1936

51

A DISCOURSE ON NON-VIOLENCE

Negro's the Same Problem

Readers of *Harijan* will perhaps remember how the central topic of the members of the Negro delegation who saw Gandhiji about a year ago was non-violence. Two Negro gentlemen, who came for the recent world's meeting of the committees of the Y. M. C. A., also had the same question to discuss, which shows how remarkably similar are their problems to ours! I am going to take up Dr. Tobias' questions first, though he saw Gandhiji later and on his day of silence. For the long discourse with Prof. Mays was a kind of commentary on the brief replies given in writing to Dr. Tobias, and both together make up one of the interesting talks Gandhiji often gives on the subject of non-violence.

"Your doctrine of non-violence has profoundly influenced my life," said Dr. Tobias. "Do you believe in it as strongly as ever?"

"I do indeed," said Gandhiji. "My faith in it is growing."

"Negroes in U. S. A.—12 million—are struggling to obtain such fundamental rights as freedom from mob-violence, unrestricted use of the ballot, freedom from segregation, etc. Have you, out of your struggle in India, a word of advice and encouragement to give us?"

"I had to contend against some such thing, though on a much smaller scale, in South Africa. The difficulties are not yet over. All I can say is that there is no other way than the way of non-violence — a way, however, not of the weak and ignorant but of the strong and wise."

"Travancore indicates that your full identification with the untouchables is bearing fruit. Do you think Travancore's example will be followed by other States in the near future?"

"I shall be surprised if it is not."

"What word shall I give my Negro brethren as to the outlook for the future?"

"With right which is on their side and the choice of non-violence as their only weapon, if they will make it such, a bright future is assured."

Prof. Mays was lucky enough to find Gandhiji free in Sevagram to give him as much time as he wanted, and in the course of the talk with him Gandhiji disclosed the secret of the conviction of a lifetime.

As the talk proceeded, one felt as though Gandhiji was giving Dr. Mays what he had seen not with any of the known senses but with a 'sixth' sense. I was put in mind of Rudolf Steiner who is said to have developed a second sight. "The study of Mathematics," says a writer, "reassured him, and in geometry he experienced for the first time the existence of a real world which is not visible to the bodily eye. The triangle he learned about in geometry was not a particular triangle that he himself might draw but the essence of all triangles. This ideal triangle could be seen with the 'inner eye' but could not be reproduced, and this absolute idea of a geometrical figure showed the boy that it was not wrong to 'see things which are not visible to our physical sight.'" To Dr. Mays Gandhiji gave what may be termed the mathematics of non-violence.

A Misnomer

"Passive resistance," said Gandhiji, "is a misnomer for non-violent resistance. It is much more active than violent resistance. It is direct, ceaseless, but three-fourths invisible and only one-

fourth visible. In its visibility it seems to be ineffective, e.g. the spinning wheel which I have called the symbol of non-violence. In its visibility it appears ineffective, but it is really intensely active and most effective in ultimate result. This knowledge enables me to detect flaws in the way in which the votaries of non-violence are doing their spinning. I ask for more vigilance and more untiredness. Non-violence is an intensely active force when properly understood and used. A violent man's activity is most visible, while it lasts. But it is always transitory. What can be more visible than the Abyssinians done to death by Italians? There it was lesser violence pitted against much greater. But if the Abyssinians had retired from the field and allowed themselves to be slaughtered, their seeming inactivity would have been much more effective though not for the moment visible. Hitler and Mussolini on the one hand and Stalin on the other are able to show the immediate effectiveness of violence. But it will be as transitory as that of Chenghis' slaughter. But the effects of Buddha's non-violent action persist and are likely to grow with age. And the more it is practised, the more effective and inexhaustible it becomes, and ultimately the whole world stands agape and exclaims, 'a miracle has happened.' All miracles are due to the silent and effective working of invisible force. Non-violence is the most invisible and the most effective."

Can Masses Be Trained?

"I have no doubt in my mind about the superiority of non-violence," said Prof. Mays. "But the thing that bothers me is about its exercise on a large scale, the difficulty of so disciplining the mass mind on the point of love. It is easier to discipline individuals. What should be the strategy when they break out? Do we retreat or do we go on?"

"I have had that experience," said Gandhiji, "in the course of our movement here. People do not gain the training by preaching. Non-violence cannot be preached. It has to be practised. The practice of violence can be taught to people by outward symbols. You shoot at boards, then at targets, then at beasts. Then you are passed as an expert in the art of destruction. The non-violent man has no outward weapon and, therefore, not only his speech but his action also seems ineffective. I

may say all kinds of sweet words to you without meaning them. On the other hand I may have real love in me and yet my outward expression may be forbidding. Then outwardly my action in both cases may be the same and yet the effect may be different. For the effect of our action is often more potent when it is not patently known. Thus the unconscious effect you are making on me I may never know. It is, nevertheless, infinitely greater than the conscious effect. In violence there is nothing invisible. Non-violence, on the other hand, is three-fourths invisible, and so the effect is in the inverse ratio to its invisibility. Non-violence, when it becomes active, travels with extraordinary velocity, and then it becomes a miracle. So the mass mind is affected first unconsciously, then consciously. When it becomes consciously affected there is demonstrable victory. In my own experience, when people seemed to be weakening there was no consciousness of defeat in me. Thus I was fuller of hope in the efficacy of non-violence after the renunciation of civil disobedience in 1922, and today I continue to be in the same hopeful mood. It is not a mere emotional thing. Supposing I saw no signs of dawn coming, I should not lose faith. Everything has to come in its proper time.

"I have discussions here with my co-workers about the scavenging work we are doing. 'Why can't we do it after Swaraj?' they say. 'We may do it better after Swaraj.' I say to them, 'No. The reform has to come today, it must not wait for Swaraj; in fact the right type of Swaraj will come only out of such work.' Now I cannot show you, as perhaps I cannot show some of my co-workers, the connection between Swaraj and scavenging. If I have to win Swaraj non-violently, I must discipline my people. The maimed and the blind and the leprous cannot join the army of violence. There is also an age-limit for serving in the army. For a non-violent struggle there is no age-limit; the blind and the maimed and the bed-ridden may serve, and not only men but women also. When the spirit of non-violence pervades the people and actually begins to work, its effect is visible to all.

"But now comes your poser. There are people, you say, who do not believe in non-violence as you do. Are you to sit quiet? The friends ask: 'If not now, when will you act?' I

say in reply: 'I may not succeed in my lifetime, but my faith that victory can only come through non-violence is stronger than ever.' When I spoke on the cult of the spinning wheel at Faizpur, a newspaper correspondent imputed astuteness to me. Nothing could be farther from my mind. When I came to Sevagram I was told the people might not co-operate and might even boycott me. I said: 'That may be. But this is the way non-violence works.' If I go to a village which is still farther off, the experiment may work better. This thing has come in my search after the technique of non-violence. And each day that passes makes my faith brighter. I have come here to bring that faith to fruition and to die in the process if that is God's will. Non-violence to be worth anything has to work in the face of hostile forces. But there may be action in inaction. And action may be worse than inaction."

Violence in a Spirit of Love?

"Is it ever possible to administer violence in a spirit of love?"

"No. Never. I shall give an illustration from my own experiment. A calf was lame and had developed terrible sores; he could not eat and breathed with difficulty. After three days' argument with myself and my co-workers I put an end to its life. Now that action was non-violent because it was wholly unselfish, inasmuch as the sole purpose was to achieve the calf's relief from pain. Some people have called this an act of violence. I have called it a surgical operation. I should do exactly the same thing with my child, if he were in the same predicament. My point is that non-violence as the supreme law of our being ceases to be such the moment you talk of exceptions."

"How is a minority to act against an overwhelming majority?" asked Prof. Mays.

"I would say that a minority can do much more in the way of non-violence than a majority. I had an English friend called Symonds. He used to say: 'I am with you so long as you are in a minority. After you are in a majority we are quits.' I had less diffidence in handling my minority in South Africa than I had here in handling a majority. But it would be wholly wrong for that reason to say that non-violence is a weapon of the weak. The use of non-violence requires greater bravery than that of

violence. When Daniel defied the laws of the Meads and Persians, his action was non-violent."

Consequences to the Enemy

"Should the thought of consequences that might accrue to the enemy as a result of your non-violence at all constrain you ?"

"Certainly. You may have to suspend your movement as I did in South Africa when the Government was faced with the revolt of European Labour. The latter asked me to make common cause with them. I said 'no'."

"And non-violence will never rebound on you, whereas violence will be self-destroyed ?" interposed the Professor.

"Yes. Violence must beget violence. But let me tell you that here too my argument has been countered by a great man who said : 'Look at the history of non-violence. Jesus dies on the cross, but his followers shed blood.' This proves nothing. We have no data before us to pass judgment. We do not know the whole of the life of Jesus. The followers perhaps had not imbibed fully the message of non-violence. But I must warn you against carrying the impression with you that mine is the final word on non-violence. I know my own limitations. I am but a humble seeker after truth. And all I claim is that every experiment of mine has deepened my faith in non-violence as the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. Its use is not restricted to individuals merely, but it can be practised on a mass scale."

Harijan, 20-3-1937 M. D.

52

OUR FAILURE

The communal riots in Allahabad — the head-quarters of the Congress, and the necessity of summoning the assistance of the police and even the military show that the Congress has not yet become fit to substitute the British authority. It is best to face this naked truth, however unpleasant it may be.

The Congress claims to represent the whole of India, not merely those few who are on the Congress register. It should represent even those who are hostile to it and who will even crush it, if they can. Not until we make good that claim, shall we be in a position to displace the British Government and function as an independent nation.

This proposition holds good whether we seek to displace British rule by violent action or non-violent.

Most probably by the time these lines appear in print peace would have been established in Allahabad and the other parts. That, however, will not take us further in our examination of the fitness of the Congress as an organization ready to displace British authority in its entirety.

No Congressman will seriously doubt that the Congress is not at the present moment capable of delivering the goods if it was called upon to do so. If it was capable, it would not wait for the call. But every Congressman believes that the Congress is fast becoming such a body. The brilliant success at Haripura will be cited as the most conclusive proof of the fact.

The riots and certain other things I can mention should make us pause and ask ourselves whether the Congress is really growing from strength to strength. I must own that I have been guilty of laying that claim. Have I been overhasty in doing so?

It is my conviction that the phenomenal growth of the Congress is due to its acceptance and enforcement, however imperfect, of the policy of non-violence. Time has arrived to consider the nature of Congress non-violence. Is it non-violence of the weak and the helpless, or of the strong and the powerful? If it is the former, it will never take us to our goal and, if long pract-

ised, may even render us for ever unfit for self-government. The weak and helpless are non-violent in action because they must be. But in reality they harbour violence in their breasts and simply await opportunity for its display. It is necessary for Congressmen individually and collectively to examine the quality of their non-violence. If it does not come out of real strength, it would be best and honest for the Congress to make such a declaration and make the necessary changes in its behaviour.

By this time, i.e. after seventeen years' practice of non-violence, the Congress should be able to put forth a non-violent army of volunteers numbering not a few thousands but lacs who would be equal to every occasion where the police and the military are required. Thus, instead of one brave Pashupatinath Gupta who died in the attempt to secure peace,* we should be able to produce hundreds. And a non-violent army acts unlike armed men, as well in times of peace as of disturbances. They would be constantly engaged in constructive activities that make riots impossible. Theirs will be the duty of seeking occasions for bringing warring communities together, carrying on peace propaganda, engaging in activities that would bring and keep them in touch with every single person, male and female, adult and child, in their parish or division. Such an army should be ready to cope with any emergency, and in order to still the frenzy of mobs should risk their lives in numbers sufficient for the purpose. A few hundred, maybe a few thousand, such spotless deaths will once for all put an end to the riots. Surely a few hundred young men and women giving themselves deliberately to mob fury will be any day a cheap and braver method of dealing with such madness than the display and use of the police and the military.

It has been suggested that when we have our independence riots and the like will not occur. This seems to me to be an empty hope, if in the course of the struggle for freedom we do not understand and use the technique of non-violent action in every conceivable circumstance. To the extent that the Con-

* The following correction by M. D. appeared in the next issue (dated 2-4-1938) of *Harijan*:

"We are glad to have to say that the statement that Shri Pashupatinath Gupta was dead is incorrect. We have a telegram from the Allahabad District Congress Committee saying that though he was seriously stabbed he is making satisfactory progress."

gress ministers have been obliged to make use of the police and the military, to that extent, in my opinion, we must admit our failure. That the ministers could not have done otherwise is unfortunately only too true. I should like every Congressman, I should like the Working Committee, to ask themselves why we have failed, if they think with me that we have.

Harijan, 26-3-1938

53

AN APPEAL FOR SELF-EXAMINATION

[The following is a condensed summary of Gandhiji's opening address to the Gandhi Seva Sangh at Delang (Orissa) on the afternoon of 25th March. M.D.]

The Creed

Kishorlalbhai, our President, who is more ill than I, has prepared a long and well thought out address. He has dealt at great length with our mutual misunderstandings, bickerings, our refusal to understand and bear with one another and so on, and asked whether our faith is anything worth, if it does not reflect itself more and more in our daily lives. Do we feel that we are marching further forward every day towards our goal? Do we feel that we are more non-violent today than we were when we met a year ago? Have there been fewer occasions when we gave way to irritation and anger? Such questions we have to ask ourselves again and again. For the way of non-violence and truth is sharp as the razor's edge. Its practice is more than our daily food. Rightly taken food sustains the body; rightly practised non-violence sustains the soul. The body food we can only take in measured quantities and at stated intervals; non-violence, which is the spiritual food, we have to take in continually. There is no such thing as satiation. I have to be conscious every moment that I am pursuing the goal, and have to examine myself in terms of that goal.

The very first step in non-violence is that we cultivate in our daily life, as between ourselves, truthfulness, humility,

tolerance, loving kindness. Honesty, they say in English, is the best policy. But in terms of non-violence it is not mere policy. Policies may and do change. Non-violence is an unchangeable creed. It has to be pursued in face of violence raging around you. Non-violence with a non-violent man is no merit. In fact it becomes difficult to say whether it is non-violence at all. But when it is pitted against violence, then one realizes the difference between the two. This we cannot do unless we are ever wakeful, ever vigilant, ever striving.

The Riots

The riots in U. P. affected me deeply. I discussed them with Maulana Azad and the Bose brothers in terms of non-violence. I felt that we were getting not nearer towards our goal but farther away from it. Haripura gave me reason to hope that we were growing in strength, and that in spite of our shortcomings we should be able to see Swaraj in my lifetime. I had thought that we should, in the course of the year, acquire that strength. But the riots in Allahabad and elsewhere came as a rude shock. We were, to our shame, compelled to seek the aid of the police and the military.

Supposing the Viceroy were to invite the President of the Congress to meet him and to state the Congress terms, do you think he would have the strength to say, 'The Congress is capable of taking charge of the administration, the British may go?' Do you think we could tell him that we should be able to do without the police and the military, that we should be able to come to terms with the Princes, the Zamindars and with the Mussalmans? I am afraid we could not honestly say that we should easily be able to come to terms with these. And yet if we have real non-violence in us, we should be able to say and do these things.

Not the Weapon of the Weak

I therefore ask you and myself whether our non-violence is of the weak and not of the strong as it should be. That it can work to a certain extent in the hands of the weak is true. It has so worked with us. But when it becomes a cloak for our weakness, it emasculates us. Far better than emasculation

would be the bravery of those who use physical force. Far better than cowardice would be meeting one's death fighting. We were perhaps all originally brutes, and I am prepared to believe that we have become men by a slow process of evolution from the brute. We were thus born with brute strength, but we were born men in order to realize God who dwells in us. That indeed is the privilege of man, and it distinguishes him from the brute creation. But to realize God is to see Him in all that lives, i.e. to realize our oneness with all creation. This is impossible unless we voluntarily shun physical force and develop conscious non-violence that is latent in every one of us. This can only come out of strength. Have we the non-violence of the strong? It is open to us to discard it as an impossible ideal and choose instead the method of violence. But the choice has to be made.

And if it is a weapon of the strong, then there are some inescapable conclusions. We should be able to deal with riots and stop the increasing tension between Hindus and Mussalmans. What, you will ask, we as votaries of non-violence should have done to quell these riots? Well, it was primarily the work of the Congress Committee to quell the riots. We should have thousands of volunteers ready to serve in a crisis of this kind. In 1921 we drew up a pledge for volunteers, wherein it was provided that a volunteer should be non-violent in thought, word and deed. Hakimsaheb Ajmal Khan, who was then President, had the same pledge accepted by the Khilafat volunteers. It was not without difficulty that the pledge was accepted by the Khilafat Conference. For a volunteer to be non-violent in word and deed was all right, some of the Maulanas said. But to expect them to be non-violent in thought was a tall order. I was seeking, they said, to be master of their minds. I said, 'No. The mastery is to be of *ahimsa*, not of any single individual.' Ultimately they accepted the pledge. But, in spite of our having accepted the pledge 17 years ago, we have not developed the irresistible strength that such acceptance of *ahimsa* means. The reason is that we have not troubled, we have not laboured, to organize such a non-violent volunteer army. If we cannot do so, if we cannot carry out the pledge, it would be well to reconsider our position. The tragedy is that the pledge is still in

existence, but it exists on paper. If we had on a sufficient scale such a non-violent army as the pledge contemplates, we should not have had these riots ; and if there had been, they would have quelled the riots or immolated themselves in the attempt. We have heard of only one who met his death. I admire his self-immolation. But my breast would have swelled with joy, if there had been several Guptas.

Do you think this is an empty dream ? Do you think we cannot quell the riots even with such a non-violent army ? If you really think so, if that is the conclusion that you arrived at after calm and dispassionate thinking, you must also conclude that Swaraj cannot be attained by means of non-violence.

Harijan, 2-4-1938

54

THE CHOICE

My remarks arising out of the recent riots in U. P. have attracted much attention. Friends have sent me cuttings from the Press. This is some of the criticism printed or spoken :

(1) My writing betrayed hysteria.

(2) I wrote without sufficient data.

(3) I had recanted my views on non-cooperation and civil resistance.

(4) I had been driven to the policy of the Liberals.

(5) Congressmen had never adopted non-violence as between themselves.

(6) I was expecting the impossible from human nature.

(7) If my position was accepted, Swaraj would never be obtained, for all India could never become non-violent.

There is much more I could cull from the criticism. I have only taken the relevant parts.

1. If my article betrayed hysteria, the symptoms still persist, for in spite of the criticism which I have studied with the care it demanded, I see nothing to change the position I have

taken up. The critics should remember that my proposition was specific and narrow. Swaraj could not be obtained through non-violent means unless our non-violence was of the brave and such as to be able to deal effectively with violence. I have not maintained that it could not be obtained by other means. But if it could be so obtained, we were not ready to deliver the goods, for we were not ready for matching our force against the British.

2. All the data required were that there were riots, no matter on how small a scale, that Congressmen were not able to deal with them non-violently, and that the aid of the police and the military had to be summoned. There was no dispute about these three broad facts. They were enough to enable me to draw the conclusions I did. In this there was no reflection on the ministers. I have admitted that they could not have acted otherwise. The fact, however, remains that the Congress non-violence was not able to cope with the emergency.

3. There is nothing in my article to warrant the inference that I had lost my faith in non-cooperation and civil resistance. All I need say is that it is brighter than ever. The two are quite enough to bring Swaraj, provided that non-violence practised is of the bravest.

4. I wish I could be drawn towards the policy of the Liberals. I have many personal friends among them. But they have no sanction. I claim that I have an infallible sanction. My article was written to show that during the riots it was not the sanction that had failed, the failure was of the organization which had accepted the sanction, namely, active, constructive non-violence.

5. I can only refer the critics to the many resolutions of the Congress which do not confine the use of non-violence only towards Englishmen. Indeed I remember having many discussions at the Working Committee meetings at which the necessity of non-violence among ourselves was emphasized.

6. Well, human nature has hitherto responded nobly to the call of non-violence. But I am concerned with the Congress nature. Congressmen have to sign a pledge which commits them to non-violence. My question was and is—have they non-vio-

lence in them? If they have, is it of the brave? My thesis is that, if it is of the brave, it should be enough for dealing with the riots and for delivering the goods.

7. This is answered in the foregoing.

But I have the fear that our non-violence is not of the kind required. Congressmen may not treat my warning lightly. After all I am supposed to be the Congress expert, however inefficient, on non-violence. I have confidence in my readings and my remedies. I cite Ahmedabad and Viramgam violence, Bombay violence during the Prince's visit, and Chauri Chaura on the eve of Bardoli. The results have amply justified the remedies applied at my instance, though on these occasions critics were not wanting who had expressed their strong disapproval of the suspensions. I have no doubt about my present diagnosis about the remedies. The remedies are not beyond our ability, if we have a living conviction about non-violence and its nature. Here are some of the remedies :

1. We must discover a solution for the Hindu Muslim tension. I use that expression deliberately instead of 'communal' — for, if we find this, the other will follow as a matter of course.

2. There must be a purging of the Congress registers so as to make them proof against bogus voters. From all accounts I receive, our registers contain too many bogus names to be called at all accurate.

3. Congressmen must not be afraid to find themselves in a minority.

4. Without delay every Provincial Congress Committee should raise a proper corps of volunteers pledged to non-violence in thought, word and deed. And there should be a manual of instruction as to training etc., prepared for universal use.

There is nothing heroic or impracticable in these suggestions. But they are impracticable, if those who lead have no living faith in non-violence. If they have not, the sooner non-violence is removed from the Congress vocabulary the better it is for the Congress and the nation. The alternative is certainly not unadulterated violence. The Congress is the only political organization in the world which has, at my instance, adopted unadulterated non-violence for the attainment of Swaraj. It is

its only sanction. I dare to say that, if its quality is not what it should be, it will do great harm to the nation. In the last heat we may be found to be cowards instead of brave men and women. And there is no disgrace greater than cowardice for fighters for freedom. Surely there is nothing to be ashamed of in retracing our steps. If we feel that we shall not be able to displace the British power without a violent struggle, the Congress must say so to the nation and prepare accordingly. We must do what is being done all the world over—'forbear when we can, hit when we must.' If that is to be our creed or policy, we have lost precious seventeen years. But it is never too late to learn and mend. Seventeen years in the life of a nation is nothing. It will go hard with Congressmen, if having received the warning they do not make the choice.

Harijan, 9-4-1938

55

MARTIAL v. MORAL

It is often forgotten that the Congress has only moral authority to back it. The ruling power has the martial, though it often dilutes the martial with the moral. This vital difference has come to fore since the assumption of office by the Congress in seven provinces. This office-holding is a step towards either greater prestige or its total loss. If it is not to be a total loss, the ministers and the legislators have to be watchful of their own personal and public conduct. They have to be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion in everything. They may not make private gains either for themselves or for their relatives or friends. If the relatives or friends get any appointment, it must be only because they are the best among the candidates, and their market value is always greater than what they get under the Government. The ministers and the legislators of the Congress ticket have to be fearless in the performance of their duty. They must always be ready to risk the loss of their seats or offices. Offices and seats in the legislatures have no merit outside their ability to raise the prestige and power of the

Congress. And since both depend wholly upon the possession of morals, both public and private, any moral lapse means a blow to the Congress. This is the necessary implication of non-violence. If the Congress non-violence is merely confined to abstention from causing physical hurt to the British officials and their dependants, such non-violence can never bring us independence. It is bound to be worsted in the final heat. Indeed, we shall find it to be worthless, if not positively harmful, long before the final heat is reached.

There is considerable force in the argument of those who have conceived Congress non-violence in that narrow light when they say that it is a broken reed.

If on the other hand non-violence, with all the implications, is the Congress policy, let every Congressman examine himself and reconstruct himself accordingly. Let him not wait for instructions from the Working Committee. After all the Working Committee can act only in so far as it interprets the public mind. And non-violence is not a quality to be evolved or expressed to order. It is an inward growth depending for sustenance upon intense individual effort.

I have received several letters offering the writers' names for enrolment as volunteers ready to immolate themselves at times of rioting and the like. To these writers I would suggest that they enlist co-workers themselves, form local corps, and begin training in accordance with the suggestion I have made. Let them not confine themselves merely to preparedness for emergencies, but for the daily walk of life in all its departments, personal, domestic, social, economic, political, religious. Only thus will they find themselves more than ready for dealing with emergencies in their own localities or beats. They may not aim, except indirectly, at influencing events happening hundreds of miles away from their scene of activity. That ability will come, if the right beginning is made in the first instance.

Harijan, 23-4-1938

56
MORE POSERS

Nowadays Gandhiji hardly enters into discussions on academic questions, if only for the reason that he has very little time for this. But in Peshawar, where he saw so many new faces and where though he had not the health he had some time back, he answered questions of a more or less academic character. Take the following from a professor: "How is it," he asked, "that many of the English pacifists are talking of defence and elaborate plans of defence?" And, "May it not be possible to carry pacifism too far? Supposing Abyssinia had simply non-resisted and said to Italy, 'Do your worst,' would the Italians have been ashamed and desisted from their design? Lansbury said they would."

"I shall take up the Abyssinian question first," said Gandhiji. "I can answer it only in terms of active, resistant non-violence. Now non-violence is the activest force on earth, and it is my conviction that it never fails. But if the Abyssinians had adopted the attitude of non-violence of the strong, i.e., the non-violence which breaks to pieces but never bends, Mussolini would have had no interest in Abyssinia. Thus if they had simply said: 'You are welcome to reduce us to dust or ashes, but you will not find one Abyssinian ready to co-operate with you,' what could Mussolini have done? He did not want a desert. Mussolini wanted submission and not defiance, and if he had met with the quiet, dignified and non-violent defiance that I have described, he would certainly have been obliged to retire. Of course, it is open to anyone to say that human nature has not been known to rise to such height. But if we have made unexpected progress in physical sciences, why may we do less in the science of the soul?

"Now about the English pacifists. I know there are some great and sincere men amongst them, but they are thinking in terms of pacifism as distinguished from unadulterated non-violence. I am essentially a non-violent man, and I believe in war bereft of every trace of violence. An essentially non-violent

man does not calculate the consequences. The English pacifists you are talking of calculate, and when they speak of pacifism they do so with the mental reservation that when pacifism fails arms might be used. With them not non-violence but arms are the ultimate sanction, as was the case with Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. No, someone has to arise in England with the living faith to say that England, whatever happens, shall not use arms. They are a nation fully armed, and if they having the power deliberately refuse to use arms, theirs will be the first example of Christianity in active practice on a mass scale. That will be a real miracle."

Harijan, 14-5-1938 M. D.

57

QUALIFICATIONS OF A PEACE BRIGADE

Some time ago I suggested the formation of a peace brigade whose members would risk their lives in dealing with riots, especially communal. The idea was that this brigade should substitute the police and even the military. This reads ambitious. The achievement may prove impossible. Yet, if the Congress is to succeed in its non-violent struggle, it must develop the power to deal peacefully with such situations. Communal riots are engineered by politically-minded men. Many of those who take part in them are under the influence of the latter. Surely it should not be beyond the wit of Congressmen to devise a method or methods of avoiding ugly communal situations by peaceful means. I say this irrespective of whether there is or there is not a communal pact. It cannot be that any party seeks to force a pact by violent means. Even if such a pact were a possibility, it would not be worth the paper on which it might be written. For behind such a pact there will be no common understanding. What is more, even after a pact is arrived at it would be too much to expect that there would never be any communal riots.

Let us, therefore, see what qualifications a member of the contemplated peace brigade should possess.

1. He or she must have a living faith in non-violence. This is impossible without a living faith in God. A non-violent man can do nothing save by the power and grace of God. Without it he won't have the courage to die without anger, without fear and without retaliation. Such courage comes from the belief that God sits in the hearts of all, and that there should be no fear in the presence of God. The knowledge of the omnipresence of God also means respect for the lives of even those who may be called opponents or *goondas*. This contemplated intervention is a process of stilling the fury of man when the brute in him gets the mastery over him.

2. This messenger of peace must have equal regard for all the principal religions of the earth. Thus, if he is a Hindu, he will respect the other faiths current in India. He must, therefore, possess a knowledge of the general principles of the different faiths professed in the country.

3. Generally speaking this work of peace can only be done by local men in their own localities.

4. The work can be done singly or in groups. Therefore Nevertheless one would na- no one need wait for companions. turally seek companions in one's own locality and form a local brigade.

5. This messenger of peace will cultivate, through personal service, contacts with the people in his locality or chosen circle, so that when he appears to deal with ugly situations, he does not descend upon the members of a riotous assembly as an utter stranger liable to be looked upon as a suspect or an unwelcome visitor.

6. Needless to say, a peace-bringer must have a character beyond reproach and must be known for his strict impartiality.

7. Generally there are previous warnings of coming storms. If these are known, the peace brigade will not wait till the conflagration breaks out, but will try to handle the situation in anticipation.

8. Whilst, if the movement spreads, it might be well if there are some whole-time workers, it is not absolutely necessary that there should be. The idea is to have as many good and true men and women as possible. These can be had only if

volunteers are drawn from those who are engaged in various walks of life but have leisure enough to cultivate friendly relations with the people living in their circle and otherwise possess the qualifications required of a member of the peace brigade.

9. There should be a distinctive dress worn by the members of the contemplated brigade so that in course of the time they will be recognized without the slightest difficulty.

These are but general suggestions. Each centre can work out its own constitution on the basis here suggested.

Lest false hopes may be raised, I must warn workers against entering the hope that I can play any active part in the formation of peace brigades. I have not the health, energy or time for it. I find it hard enough to cope with the tasks I dare not shirk. I can only guide and make suggestions through correspondence or these columns. Therefore let those who appreciate the idea and feel they have the ability, take the initiative themselves. I know that the proposed brigade has great possibilities, and that the idea behind it is quite capable of being worked out in practice.

Harijan, 18-6-1938

58

THE QUESTION OF QUESTIONS

Dr. Kalidas Nag, who is often invited abroad on culture missions and who is about to sail shortly for Australia, broke journey here on his way to Calcutta. "Wherever I have been," he said, "even in that wrongly called 'Pacific' region, non-violence is the question of questions. But it is just a question or a matter of doubt,—though even that should be enough—doubt that the weapon of violence by which they had set so much store up to now may not be their salvation. But, on the other hand, they also ask, has not Buddhism been responsible for widespread emasculation? And whatever may be the potency of non-violence, is it not impossible as a weapon of defence?"

"Do you want me to answer these questions?" asked Gandhiji, "or did you reply to them?"

"I nave been replying to them after my own historical fashion, but I want you to answer them, for yours will be authentic answers. I have been trying to show them that even though there have been wars and crusades and so on, on the surface, there has been throughout history a demonstrable undercurrent of non-violence. But when I go again I can give them your answer."

"Well," said Gandhiji, after a slight pause, "the answer is being given in India in actual practice. It is no use citing the example of China and Japan. India is the only place where an answer, if it must come, can come. Experience here is quite encouraging. Intellectually, of course, even many people in the West have come to recognize the futility of violence, and have begun to ask if non-violence may not after all be worth a trial. Dr. Stanley Jones has sent me a copy of his recent article — *Gandhian Solution of the Chinese Trouble* — and he has seriously discussed various forms of non-cooperation that may be successfully adopted. There was a time when Dr. Jones had not much belief in non-cooperation, but he now seriously suggests it as a non-violent solution, and has pressed me to go to Europe to preach peace. But so long as my mission in India remains unfulfilled, my visit to the West on a peace mission must be a vain effort. Whilst it is true that non-violence has made much headway in India, it is not of much value to an outsider and a critic at that."

"What you say, Mahatmaji, is quite correct, viz. that the answer is being given, and if it is really given on such a scale as the size of our country, it will be most effective. For their acceptance—even intellectual—of non-violence and non-cooperation is in a spirit of condescension."

"It is impossible," said Gandhiji, "that a thing essentially of the soul can ever be imparted through the intellect. It is just like trying to import faith in God through the intellect. It cannot be, as it is essentially a matter of heart. Faith can be turned into knowledge by experience, and it can come only through the heart and not the intellect. The intellect, if anything, acts as a barrier in matters of faith."

M. D.

Harijan, 18-6-1938

59

MESSAGE TO CHINA

Prof. Tao would not go without a message from Gandhiji for the people of China. He explained that even a non-violent message would be welcome, for the Chinese were not averse to non-violence. They were engaged in a war of self-defence, but in other respects they were observing non-violence. Thus they would never touch non-combatants. They had no enmity against the Japanese people. On May 20 Chinese planes had flown over Japanese towns, and they might easily have spread death and destruction among the people of Japan in retaliation for the bombing of so many Chinese ports by Japan. But instead of raining bombs they rained handbills and leaflets showing the wrong of the war. It was a unique phenomenon, for, as Dr. Kung had said, "we refrained from purely humanitarian grounds; our enemies are not the Japanese people but the Japanese militarists." In this, said Prof. Tao, they were but following the principle of non-violence.

"But," wrote Gandhiji in reply, "the self-inflicted restraint will not last when the real stress comes. The temptation will be irresistible. I shall not be surprised. It is inevitable. There is no love in war. We have got to come to the conclusion that there is to be either complete non-violence or undiluted violence. Is not this enough message?"

Prof. Tao wondered if some day the Chinese might expect to have Gandhiji in their midst.

"I almost came to your country," wrote Gandhiji, "when those who had invited me had to stop me from going owing to the disturbances that had taken place. I do want to see peace reigning in your land during my lifetime. Nothing will please me better than to visit your great country some day."

Harijan, 27-8-1938 M. D.

LOGICAL CONSEQUENCE

One must feel happy that the danger of war has been averted for the time being. Is the price paid likely to be too great? Is it likely that honour has been sold? Is it a triumph of organized violence? Has Herr Hitler discovered a new technique of organizing violence which enables him to gain his end without shedding blood? I do not profess to know European politics. But it does appear to me that small nationalities cannot exist in Europe with their heads erect. They must be absorbed by their larger neighbours. They must become vassals.

Europe has sold her soul for the sake of a seven days' earthly existence. The peace Europe gained at Munich is a triumph of violence; it is also its defeat. If England and France were sure of victory, they would certainly have fulfilled their duty of saving Czechoslovakia or of dying with it. But they quailed before the combined violence of Germany and Italy. But what have Germany and Italy gained? Have they added anything to the moral wealth of mankind?

In penning these lines my concern is not with the great powers. Their height dazes me. Czechoslovakia has a lesson for me and us in India. The Czechs could not have done anything else when they found themselves deserted by their two powerful allies. And yet I have the hardihood to say that, if they had known the use of non-violence as a weapon for the defence of national honour, they would have faced the whole might of Germany with that of Italy thrown in. They would have spared England and France the humiliation of suing for a peace which was no peace; and to save their honour they would have died to a man without shedding the blood of the robber. I must refuse to think that such heroism, or call it restraint, is beyond human nature. Human nature will only find itself when it fully realizes that to be human it has to cease to be beastly or brutal. Though we have the human form, without the attainment of the virtue of non-violence, we still share

the qualities of our remote reputed ancestor, the orangoutang.

These are not idle words I am writing. Let the Czechs know that the Working Committee wrung itself with pain while their doom was being decided. The pain was quite selfish in a way. But on that account it was the more real. For though numerically we are a big nation, in terms of Europe, i.e. in terms of organized scientific violence, we are smaller than Czechoslovakia. Our liberty is not merely threatened, we are fighting to regain it. The Czechs are fully armed ; we are wholly unarmed. And so the Committee sat to deliberate what its duty was by the Czechs, what part the Congress was to play if the war cloud burst on us. Were we to bargain with England for our liberty and appear to befriend Czechoslovakia, or were we to live up to the creed of non-violence and say in the hour of trial for afflicted humanity that, consistently with our creed, we could not associate ourselves with war even though it might ostensibly be for the defence of Czechoslovakia whose very existence was threatened for no fault of hers, or for the only fault that she was too small to defend herself single-handed ? The Working Committee had almost come to the conclusion that it would deny itself the opportunity of striking a bargain with England, but would make its contribution to the world peace, to the defence of Czechoslovakia and to India's freedom by declaring to the world by its action that the way to peace with honour did not lie through the mutual slaughter of the innocents, but that it lay only and truly through the practice of organized non-violence even unto death.

And this was but the logical and natural step the Working Committee could have taken, if it was to prove true to its creed. If India could gain her freedom through non-violence, as Congressmen are to believe they can, she could also defend her freedom by the same means, and hence *a fortiori* could a smaller nation like Czechoslovakia.

I do not know what actually the Working Committee would have done if the war had come. But the war is only postponed. During the breathing time, I present the way of non-violence for acceptance by the Czechs. They do not yet know what is in store for them. They can lose nothing by trying the way of non-violence. The fate of Republican Spain is hanging in the balance.

So is that of China. If in the end they all lose, they will do so not because their cause is not just, but because they are less skilled in the science of destruction or because they are undermanned. What would Republican Spain gain if it had Franco's resources, or China if she had Japan's skill in war or, the Czechs if they had the skill of Herr Hitler ? I suggest that, if it is brave, as it is, to die to a man fighting against odds, it is braver still to refuse to fight and yet to refuse to yield to the usurper. If death is a certainty in either case, is it not nobler to die with the breast bared to the enemy without malice against him within ?

Harijan, 8-10-1938

61

IF I WERE A CZECH

If I have called the arrangement with Herr Hitler 'peace without honour', it was not to cast any reflection on British or French statesmen. I have no doubt that Mr. Chamberlain could not think of anything better. He knew his nation's limitations. He wanted to avoid war, if it could be avoided at all. Short of going to war, he pulled his full weight in favour of the Czechs. That it could not save honour was no fault of his. It would be so every time there is a struggle with Herr Hitler or Signor Mussolini.

It cannot be otherwise. Democracy dreads to spill blood. The philosophy for which the two dictators stand calls it cowardice to shrink from carnage. They exhaust the resources of poetic art in order to glorify organized murder. There is no humbug about their word or deed. They are ever ready for war. There is nobody in Germany or Italy to cross their path. Their word is law.

It is different with Mr. Chamberlain or M. Daladier. They have their Parliaments and Chambers to please. They have parties to confer with. They cannot maintain themselves on a

perpetual war footing, if their language is to have a democratic accent about it.

Science of war leads one to dictatorship pure and simple. Science of non-violence can alone lead one to pure democracy. England, France and America have to make their choice. That is the challenge of the two dictators.

Russia is out of the picture just now. Russia has a dictator who dreams of peace and thinks he will wade to it through a sea of blood. No one can say what Russian dictatorship will mean to the world.

It was necessary to give this introduction to what I want to say to the Czechs and through them to all those nationalities which are called 'small' or 'weak'. I want to speak to the Czechs because their plight moved me to the point of physical and mental distress, and I felt that it would be cowardice on my part not to share with them the thoughts that were welling up within me. It is clear that the small nations must either come or be ready to come under the protection of the dictators or be a constant menace to the peace of Europe. In spite of all the goodwill in the world England and France cannot save them. Their intervention can only mean bloodshed and destruction such as has never been seen before. If I were a Czech, therefore, I would free these two nations from the obligation to defend my country. And yet I must live. I would not be a vassal to any nation or body. I must have absolute independence or perish. To seek to win in a clash of arms would be pure bravado. Not so, if in defying the might of one who would deprive me of my independence I refuse to obey his will and perish unarmed in the attempt. In so doing, though I lose the body, I save my soul, i. e. my honour.

This inglorious peace should be my opportunity. I must live down the humiliation and gain real independence.

But says a comforter, "Hitler knows no pity. Your spiritual effort will avail nothing before him."

My answer is : "You may be right. History has no record of a nation having adopted non-violent resistance. If Hitler is unaffected by my suffering, it does not matter. For I shall have lost nothing worth. My honour is the only thing worth preserving.

That is independent of Hitler's pity. But as a believer in non-violence I may not limit its possibilities. Hitherto he and his likes have built upon their invariable experience that men yield to force. Unarmed men, women and children offering non-violent resistance without any bitterness in them will be a novel experience for them. Who can dare say it is not in their nature to respond to the higher and finer forces? They have the same soul that I have."

But says another comforter, "What you say is all right for you. But how do you expect your people to respond to the novel call? They are trained to fight. In personal bravery they are second to none in the world. For you now to ask them to throw away their arms and be trained for non-violent resistance seems to me to be a vain attempt."

"You may be right. But I have a call I must answer. I must deliver my message to my people. This humiliation has sunk too deep in me to remain without an outlet. I, at least, must act up to the light that has dawned on me."

This is how I should, I believe, act if I was a Czech. When I first launched out on *satyagraha*, I had no companion. We were thirteen thousand men, women and children against a whole nation capable of crushing the existence out of us. I did not know who would listen to me. It all came as in a flash. All the 13,000 did not fight. Many fell back. But the honour of the nation was saved. New history was written by the South African *satyagraha*.

A more apposite instance, perhaps, is that of Khansaheb Abdul Gaffar Khan, the servant of God as he calls himself, the pride of Afghan as the Pathans delight to call him. He is sitting in front of me as I pen these lines. He has made several thousands of his people throw down their arms. He thinks he has imbibed the lesson of non-violence. He is not sure of his people. I reproduce below the pledge that his soldiers of peace make. I have come to the Frontier Province, or rather he has brought me, to see with my own eyes what his men here are doing. I can say in advance and at once that these men know very little of non-violence. All the treasure they have on earth is their faith in their leader. I do not cite these soldiers of peace as at all a finished illustration. I cite them as an honest attempt

being made by a soldier to convert fellow soldiers to the ways of peace. I can testify that it is an honest attempt, and whether in the end it succeeds or fails, it will have its lessons for *satyagrahis* of the future. My purpose will be fulfilled, if I succeed in reaching these men's hearts and making them see that, if their non-violence does not make them feel much braver than the possession of arms and the ability to use them, they must give up their non-violence, which is another name for cowardice, and resume their arms, which there is nothing but their own will to prevent them from taking back.

I present Dr. Benes with a weapon not of the weak but of the brave. There is no bravery greater than a resolute refusal to bend the knee to an earthly power, no matter how great, and that without bitterness of spirit and in the fullness of faith that the spirit alone lives, nothing else does.

Peshawar, 6-10-38

The Khudai Khidmatgar's Pledge

The following is a free translation of the pledge which every Khudai Khidmatgar signs before enrolment :

In presence of God I solemnly affirm that :

1. I hereby honestly and sincerely offer myself for enrolment as a Khudai Khidmatgar.

2. I shall be ever ready to sacrifice personal comfort, property, and even life itself to serve the nation and for the attainment of my country's freedom.

3. I shall not participate in factions, nor pick up a quarrel with or bear enmity towards anybody. I shall always protect the oppressed against the tyranny of the oppressor.

4. I shall not become member of any other organization, and shall not furnish security or tender apology in the course of the non-violent fight.

5. I shall always obey every legitimate order of my superior officers.

6. I shall always live up to the principle of non-violence.

7. I shall serve all humanity equally. The chief objects of my life shall be attainment of complete independence and religious freedom.

8. I shall always observe truth and purity in all my actions.
9. I shall expect no remuneration for my services.
10. All my services shall be dedicated to God, they shall not be for attaining rank or for show.

Harijan, 15-10-1938

62

WOMAN'S SPECIAL MISSION

The Editor, *Harijan*

Sir,

I have read your articles on the recent European crisis with great joy. It was only natural that you should speak to Europe now. How could you restrain yourself when humanity was on the very verge of destruction?

Will the world listen? That is the question.

There is no doubt — judging from letters from friends in England—that people there went through absolute agony during that ghastly week. I am sure the same applies to the whole world. The mere thought of war—modern warfare—with its devilish ingenuity and consequent pitiless butchery and beastiality—definitely made people think as they had never thought before. "The sigh of relief that was breathed and the gratitude to God that went up from every heart when the news came through, that war had been averted, are something that I can never forget as long as I live," writes an English friend. And yet is it just the fear of unspeakable suffering, the dread of losing one's nearest and dearest, of seeing one's country humiliated, that cause one to detest war? Are we glad war has been averted even at the humiliation of another nation? Would we have felt differently, if the sacrifice of honour had been demanded of us? Do we hate war because we realize it is the wrong way to settle disputes, or is our hatred of it part and parcel of our fear? These are questions that must be answered in the right way, if war is really to vanish from the earth.

The crisis over, however, what do we see? A more strenuous race than before for armaments, a more comprehensive and intensive organization than ever of all the resources available—of men, women, money, skill and talent—in the event of war! No avowed declaration that "war shall not be" from anywhere!

Is this not a recognition that war—however averted today—is still hanging over our heads as the proverbial sword of Damocles?

To me as a woman it is painful to realize that my sex has not contributed to world peace the quota that should be ours by instinct and prerogative to contribute. It pains me to read and hear of women's auxiliary corps being organized, of women being commandeered and volunteering to take their full share in the actual fields as well as behind the lines. And yet, when war comes, it is the women's hearts that are wrung in agony, it is their souls that are scarred beyond repair. It is all so inexplicable. Why is it that we have not chosen the better part through all the ages? Why have we, without murmur, bowed the knee to hideous, soulless, brute force? It is a sad commentary on our spiritual development. We have failed to understand our high calling. I am quite convinced that, if women could only have a heart-understanding of the power and glory of non-violence, all would be well with the world.

Why cannot you inspire and organize us women of India? Why will you not concentrate on having us as your 'sword arm'? How often have I longed for you to undertake an all India tour just for this purpose? I believe that you would have a wonderful response, for the heart of Indian womanhood is sound, and no women, perhaps, in the world have finer traditions of sacrifice and self-effacement behind them as we. Perhaps if you would make something of us, we may, in however humble a manner, be able to show the way of peace to a sorrowing and stricken world. Who knows?

22-10-1938 A WOMAN

I publish this letter not without hesitation. The correspondent's faith in my ability to stir the woman heart flatters me. But I am humble enough to recognize my limitations. It seems to me that the days of my touring are over. Whatever I can do by writing I must continue. But my faith is increasing in the efficacy of silent prayer. It is by itself an art—perhaps the highest art requiring the most refined deligence. I do believe that it is woman's mission to exhibit *ahimsa* at its highest and best. But why should it be a man to move the woman's heart? If the appeal is addressed exclusively to me not as man but as the (supposed to be) best exponent of *ahimsa* to be practised on a mass scale, I have no urge in me to go about preaching the doctrine to the women of India. I can assure my correspondent that there is no want of will in me that deters me from responding to her appeal. My feeling is that, if men of the Congress can retain their faith in *ahimsa* and prosecute the non-violent

programme faithfully and fully, the women will be automatically converted. And it may be that there shall arise one among them who will be able to go much further than I can ever hope to do. For woman is more fitted than man to make explorations and take bolder action in *ahimsa*. For the courage of self-sacrifice woman is any day superior to man, as I believe man is to woman for the courage of the brute.

Bannu, 25-10-38

Harijan, 5-11-1938

63

WHY NOT GREAT POWERS ?

In the criticisms on my recent writings on the plight of Czechoslovakia, I have observed one thing which demands an answer.

Some critics argue that, if the non-violent remedy I have suggested for the Czechs is only for comparatively weak because small nations like them and not for the great powers like England or France or America, it cannot be of much value, if any.

Now if the critics will re-read my article, they will see that I have refrained from suggesting it to these big powers because of their bigness, in other words, because of my timidity. But there was a more potent reason for my not addressing them. They were not in distress and therefore in no need of any remedy. To use a medical expression, they were not ailing as Czechoslovakia was. Their existence was not threatened, as Czechoslovakia's was. Any appeal from me, therefore, to the great powers would have amounted to an empty and unwanted sermon.

By experience I have also found that people rarely become virtuous for virtue's sake. They become virtuous from necessity. Nor is there anything wrong in a man becoming good under pressure of circumstances. It would be no doubt better, if he becomes good for its own sake.

The Czechs were given a choice either to surrender peacefully to Germany's might or to fight single-handed and risk almost certain destruction. It was at this moment that it became necessary for one like me to present an alternative which had proved its effectiveness under somewhat similar circumstances. My appeal to the Czechs was, in my opinion, as appropriate as it would have been inappropriate in the case of the great powers.

My critics might have, however, well asked why I had gone out of my self-prescribed orbit to speak to a Western nation when I could not show cent per cent success of non-violence on the Indian soil—more especially now, when I had begun to entertain serious doubts as to whether Congressmen were really living up to their creed or policy of non-violence. Indeed I had in mind the limitation and the present state of uncertainty about the Congress position. But my own faith in the non-violent remedy was as bright as ever when I wrote that article. And I felt that in the supreme hour of its trial it would be cowardly on my part not to suggest to the Czechs the non-violent remedy for acceptance. What may ultimately prove impossible of acceptance by crores of people, undisciplined, and unused till but recently to corporate suffering, might be possible for a small, compact, disciplined nation inured to corporate suffering. I had no right to arrogate to myself any belief that India alone and no other nation was fit for non-violent action. I must confess that I have believed and still believe that India was the fittest nation to enforce non-violent action for regaining her freedom. In spite of signs to the contrary, I have the hope that the whole mass of people, who are more than the Congress, will respond only to non-violent action. They are the readiest of all the nations of the earth for such action. But when a case for immediate application of the remedy presented itself before me, I could not restrain myself from suggesting it to the Czechs for their acceptance.

It is, however, open to the great powers to take it up any day and cover themselves with glory and earn the eternal gratitude of posterity. If they or any of them can shed the fear of destruction, if they disarm themselves, they will automatically help the rest to regain their sanity. But then these great powers have to give up imperialistic ambitions and exploitation of the

so-called uncivilized or semi-civilized nations of the earth and revise their mode of life. It means a complete revolution. Great nations can hardly be expected in the ordinary course to move spontaneously in a direction the reverse of the one they have followed and, according to their notion of value, from victory to victory. But miracles have happened before and may happen even in this very prosaic age. Who can dare limit God's power of undoing wrong? One thing is certain. If the mad race for armaments continues, it is bound to result in a slaughter such as has never occurred in history. If there is a victor left, the very victory will be a living death for the nation that emerges victorious. There is no escape from the impending doom save through a bold and unconditional acceptance of the non-violent method with all its glorious implications. Democracy and violence can ill go together. The States that are today nominally democratic have either to become frankly totalitarian or, if they are to become truly democratic, they must become courageously non-violent. It is a blasphemy to say that non-violence can only be practised by individuals and never by nations which are composed of individuals.

Peshawar, 5-11-38

Harijan, 12-11-1938

64

THE JEWS

Several letters have been received by me asking me to declare my views about the Arab-Jew question in Palestine and the persecution of the Jews in Germany. It is not without hesitation that I venture to offer my views on this very difficult question.

My sympathies are all with the Jews. I have known them intimately in South Africa. Some of them became lifelong companions. Through these friends I came to learn much of their age-long persecution. They have been the untouchables of Christianity. The parallel between their treatment by Christians and the treatment of untouchables by Hindus is very close.

Religious sanction has been invoked in both cases for the justification of the inhuman treatment meted out to them. Apart from the friendships, therefore, there is the more common universal reason for my sympathy for the Jews.

But my sympathy does not blind me to the requirements of justice. The cry for the national home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me. The sanction for it is sought in the Bible and the tenacity with which the Jews have hankered after return to Palestine. Why should they not, like other peoples of the earth, make that country their home where they are born and where they earn their livelihood ?

Palestine belongs to the Arabs in the same sense that England belongs to the English or France to the French. It is wrong and inhuman to impose the Jews on the Arabs. What is going on in Palestine today cannot be justified by any moral code of conduct. The mandates have no sanction but that of the last war. Surely it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their national home.

The nobler course would be to insist on a just treatment of the Jews wherever they are born and bred. The Jews born in France are French in precisely the same sense that Christians born in France are French. If the Jews have no home but Palestine, will they relish the idea of being forced to leave the other parts of the world in which they are settled? Or do they want a double home where they can remain at will ? This cry for the national home affords a colourable justification for the German expulsion of the Jews.

But the German persecution of the Jews seems to have no parallel in history. The tyrants of old never went so mad as Hitler seems to have gone. And he is doing it with religious zeal. For, he is propounding a new religion of exclusive and militant nationalism in the name of which any inhumanity becomes an act of humanity to be rewarded here and hereafter. The crime of an obviously mad but intrepid youth is being visited upon his whole race with unbelievable ferocity. If there ever could be a justifiable war in the name of and for humanity, a war against Germany, to prevent the wanton persecution of a

whole race, would be completely justified. But I do not believe in any war. A discussion of the pros and cons of such a war is, therefore, outside my horizon or province.

But if there can be no war against Germany, even for such a crime as is being committed against the Jews, surely there can be no alliance with Germany. How can there be alliance between a nation which claims to stand for justice and democracy and one which is the declared enemy of both? Or is England drifting towards armed dictatorship and all it means ?

Germany is showing to the world how efficiently violence can be worked when it is not hampered by any hypocrisy or weakness masquerading as humanitarianism. It is also showing how hideous, terrible and terrifying it looks in its nakedness.

Can the Jews resist this organized and shameless persecution ? Is there a way to preserve their self-respect, and not to feel helpless, neglected and forlorn ? I submit there is. No person who has faith in a living God need feel helpless or forlorn. Jehovah of the Jews is a God more personal than the God of the Christians, the Mussalmans or the Hindus, though as a matter of fact, in essence, He is common to all and one without a second and beyond description. But as the Jews attribute personality to God and believe that He rules every action of theirs, they ought not to feel helpless. If I were a Jew and were born in Germany and earned my livelihood there, I would claim Germany as my home even as the tallest gentile German might, and challenge him to shoot me or cast me in the dungeon ; I would refuse to be expelled or to submit to discriminating treatment. And for doing this I should not wait for the fellow Jews to join me in civil resistance, but would have confidence that in the end the rest were bound to follow my example. If one Jew or all the Jews were to accept the prescription here offered, he or they cannot be worse off than now. And suffering voluntarily undergone will bring them an inner strength and joy which no number of resolutions of sympathy passed in the world outside Germany can. Indeed, even if Britain, France and America were to declare hostilities against Germany, they can bring no inner joy, no inner strength. The calculated violence of Hitler may even result in a general massacre of the Jews by way of his first answer to the declaration of such hostilities.

But if the Jewish mind could be prepared for voluntary suffering, even the massacre I have imagined could be turned into a day of thanksgiving and joy that Jehovah had wrought deliverance of the race even at the hands of the tyrant. For to the God-fearing, death has no terror. It is a joyful sleep to be followed by a waking that would be all the more refreshing for the long sleep.

It is hardly necessary for me to point out that it is easier for the Jews than for the Czechs to follow my prescription. And they have in the Indian *satyagraha* campaign in South Africa an exact parallel. There the Indians occupied precisely the same place that the Jews occupy in Germany. The persecution had also a religious tinge. President Kruger used to say that the White Christians were the chosen of God and Indians were inferior beings created to serve the Whites. A fundamental clause in the Transvaal constitution was that there should be no equality between the Whites and coloured races including Asiatics. There too the Indians were consigned to ghettos described as locations. The other disabilities were almost of the same type as those of the Jews in Germany. The Indians, a mere handful, resorted to *satyagraha* without any backing from the world outside or the Indian Government. Indeed the British officials tried to dissuade the *satyagrahis* from their contemplated step. World opinion and the Indian Government came to their aid after eight years of fighting. And that too was by way of diplomatic pressure, not of a threat of war.

But the Jews of Germany can offer *satyagraha* under infinitely better auspices than the Indians of South Africa. The Jews are a compact, homogeneous community in Germany. They are far more gifted than the Indians of South Africa. And they have organized world opinion behind them. I am convinced that, if someone with courage and vision can arise among them to lead them in non-violent action, the winter of their despair can in the twinkling of an eye be turned into the summer of hope. And what has today become a degrading man-hunt can be turned into a calm and determined stand offered by unarmed men and women possessing the strength of suffering given to them by Jehovah. It will be then a truly religious resistance offered against the godless fury of dehumanized

man. The German Jews will score a lasting victory over the German gentiles in the sense that they will have converted the latter to an appreciation of human dignity. They will have rendered service to fellow-Germans and proved their title to be the real Germans as against those who are today dragging, however unknowingly, the German name into the mire.

And now a word to the Jews in Palestine. I have no doubt that they are going about in the wrong way. The Palestine of the Biblical conception is not a geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But if they must look to the Palestine of geography as their national home, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of the British gun. A religious act cannot be performed with the aid of the bayonet or the bomb. They can settle in Palestine only by the goodwill of the Arabs. They should seek to convert the Arab heart. The same God rules the Arab heart who rules the Jewish heart. They can offer *satyagraha* in front of the Arabs and offer themselves to be shot or thrown into the Dead Sea without raising a little finger against them. They will find the world opinion in their favour in their religious aspiration. There are hundreds of ways of reasoning with the Arabs, if they will only discard the help of the British bayonet. As it is, they are co-sharers with the British in despoiling a people who have done no wrong to them.

I am not defending the Arab excesses. I wish they had chosen the way of non-violence in resisting what they rightly regarded as an unwarrantable encroachment upon their country. But according to the accepted canons of right and wrong, nothing can be said against the Arab resistance in the face of overwhelming odds.

Let the Jews who claim to be the chosen race prove their title by choosing the way of non-violence for vindicating their position on earth. Every country is their home including Palestine not by aggression but by loving service. A Jewish friend has sent me a book called *The Jewish Contribution to Civilization* by Cecil Roth. It gives a record of what the Jews have done to enrich the world's literature, art, music, drama, science, medicine, agriculture, etc. Given the will, the Jew can refuse to be treated as the outcaste of the West to be despised or patronized. He can command the attention and respect of the

world by being man, the chosen creation of God, instead of being man who is fast sinking to the brute and forsaken by God. They can add to their many contributions the surpassing contribution of non-violent action.

Harijan, 26-11-1938

65

HOW TO FIGHT NATIONAL GANGSTERISM ?

Dr. Mott began the next day with these prefatory remarks: "You put in your quite original way your views on the questions I asked. I value it more than I can say. I was impressed by your recognition that there was a certain amount of advance in thought but not in action. It is a great thing that so many leading minds have begun to think about these vital questions in an advanced way. I could show you, too, that there are certain things actually concretely on foot. But, today, I want to engage your attention on another matter. What to do with 'gangster' nations, if I may use the expression frequently used? There was individual gangsterism in America. It has been put down by strong police measures both local and national. Could not we do something similar for gangsterism between nations, as instanced in Manchuria — the nefarious use of the opium poison, in Abyssinia, in Spain, in the sudden seizure of Austria, and then the case of Czechoslovakia? Now in this connection let me say I was deeply impressed by what you wrote on the Czechoslovakian crisis and on the Jewish question. Can we bring something like international police into being?"

Gandhiji: This question is not new to me.

Dr. Mott: I judge not.

Gandhiji: I have to deal with identical questions with reference to conditions in India. We have had to quell riots, communal and labour. The ministries have used military force in some cases and police in most. Now whilst I agreed that the ministers could not help doing so, I also said that the Congress ministers had proved themselves bankrupt with their stock-in-

trade, I mean their avowed weapon of non-violence. Even so, I would say in reply to the question you have asked, viz. that if the best minds of the world have not imbibed the spirit of non-violence, they would have to meet gangsterism in the orthodox way. But that would only show that we have not got far beyond the law of the jungle, that we have not yet learnt to appreciate the heritage that God has given us, that in spite of the teaching of Christianity which is 1900 years old and of Hinduism and Buddhism which are older, and even of Islam (if I have read it aright), we have not made much headway as human beings. But whilst I would understand the use of force by those who have not the spirit of non-violence in them, I would have those who know non-violence to throw their whole weight in demonstrating that even gangsterism has to be met by non-violence. For, ultimately, force, however justifiably used, will lead us into the same morass as the force of Hitler and Mussolini. There will be just a difference of degree. You and I who believe in non-violence must use it at the critical moment. We may not despair of touching the hearts even of gangsters, even if, for the moment, we may seem to be striking our heads against a blind wall.

M. D.

Harijan, 10-12-1938

66

REPLY TO GERMAN CRITICS

I was not unprepared for the exhibition of wrath from Germany over my article about the German treatment of the Jews. I have myself admitted my ignorance of European politics. But in order to commend my prescription to the Jews for the removal of their many ills, I did not need to have an accurate knowledge of European politics. The main facts about the atrocities are beyond dispute. When the anger over my writing has subsided and comparative calmness has returned, the most wrathful German will find that underlying my writing there was friendliness towards Germany, never any ill-will.

Have I not repeatedly said that active non-violence is unadulterated love — fellow-feeling ? And if the Jews, instead of being helplessly and of necessity non-violent, adopt active non-violence, i.e. fellow-feeling, for the gentile Germans deliberately, they cannot do any harm to the Germans ; and I am as certain as I am dictating these lines that the stoniest German heart will melt. Great as have been the Jewish contributions to the world's progress, this supreme act of theirs will be their greatest contribution and war will be a thing of the past.

It passes comprehension why any German should be angry over my utterly innocuous writing. Of course German critics, as others, might have ridiculed it by saying that it was a visionary's effort doomed to fail. I therefore welcome this wrath, though wholly unmerited, against my writing. Has my writing gone home ? Has the writer felt that my remedy was after all not so ludicrous as it may appear, but that it was eminently practical if only the beauty of suffering without retaliation was realized ?

To say that my writing has rendered neither myself, my movement, nor German-Indian relations any service, is surely irrelevant, if not also unworthy, implying as it does a threat ; and I should rank myself a coward if, for fear of my country or myself or Indo-German relations being harmed, I hesitated to give what I felt in the innermost recesses of my heart to be cent per cent sound advice.

The Berlin writer has surely enunciated a novel doctrine that people outside Germany may not criticize German action even from friendliest motives. For my part I would certainly welcome the interesting things that Germans or other outsiders may unearth about Indians. I do not need to speak for the British. But if I know the British people at all, they too welcome outside criticism when it is well-informed and free from malice. In this age, when distances have been obliterated, no nation can afford to imitate the fabled frog in the well. Sometimes it is refreshing to see ourselves as others see us. If, therefore, the German critics happen to see this reply, I hope that they will

not only revise their opinion about my writing but will also realize the value of outside criticism.

Sevagram, 8-12-'38

Harijan, 17-12-1938

67

SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Friends have sent me two newspaper cuttings criticizing my appeal to the Jews. The two critics suggest that in presenting non-violence to the Jews as a remedy against the wrong done to them I have suggested nothing new, and that they have been practising non-violence for the past two thousand years. Obviously, so far as these critics are concerned, I did not make my meaning clear. The Jews, so far as I know, have never practised non-violence as an article of faith or even as a deliberate policy. Indeed, it is a stigma against them that their ancestors crucified Jesus. Are they not supposed to believe in eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth? Have they no violence in their hearts for their oppressors? Do they not want the so-called democratic powers to punish Germany for her persecution and to deliver them from oppression? If they do, there is no non-violence in their hearts. Their non-violence, if it may be so called, is of the helpless and the weak.

What I have pleaded for is renunciation of violence of the heart and consequent active exercise of the force generated by the great renunciation. One of the critics says that favourable public opinion is necessary for the working of non-violence. The writer is evidently thinking of passive resistance conceived as a weapon of the weak. I have drawn a distinction between passive resistance of the weak and active non-violent resistance of the strong. The latter can and does work in the teeth of the fiercest opposition. But it ends in evoking the widest public sympathy. Sufferings of the non-violent have been known to melt the stoniest hearts. I make bold to say that, if the Jews can summon to their aid the soul power that comes only from

non-violence, Herr Hitler will bow before the courage which he has never yet experienced in any large measure in his dealings with men, and which, when it is exhibited, he will own, is infinitely superior to that shown by his best storm troopers. The exhibition of such courage is only possible for those who have a living faith in the God of Truth and Non-violence, i.e. Love.

Of course the critics can reasonably argue that the non-violence pictured by me is not possible for masses of mankind, it is possible only for the very few highly developed persons. I have combated that view and suggested that, given proper training and proper generalship, non-violence can be practised by masses of mankind.

I see, however, that my remarks are being misunderstood to mean that, because I advise non-violent resistance by the persecuted Jews, by inference I expect or would advise non-interference by the democratic powers on behalf of the Jews. I hardly need to answer this fear. Surely there is no danger of the great powers refraining from action because of anything I have said. They will, they are bound to, do all they can to free the Jews from the inhuman persecution. My appeal has force in the face of the fact that the great powers feel unable to help the Jews in an effective manner. Therefore it is that I have offered the prescription which I know to be infallible when taken in the right manner.

The most relevant criticism, however, which I have received is this: How do I expect the Jews to accept my prescription when I know that India, where I am myself working, where I call myself the self-appointed General, has not accepted it *in toto*? My answer is, 'Blessed are they that expect nothing.' I belong to the category of the blessed, in this case at least. Having got the prescription and being sure of its efficacy, I felt that I would be wrong if I did not draw attention to it when I saw cases where it could be effectively applied.

Hitherto I have refused to deal with European politics. My general position still remains the same. I presented my remedy almost in suppressed tones in the case of Abyssinia. The cases of the Czechs and the Jews became more vivid to me than the case of the Abyssinians. And I could not restrain myself from writing. Perhaps Dr. Mott was right when he said to me the

other day that I must write more and more articles like those on the Czechs and the Jews, if only because they must aid me in the Indian struggle. He said that the West was never more prepared than now to listen to the message of non-violence.

Sevagram, 9-12-'38

Harijan, 17-12-1938

68

NON-VIOLENCE AND WORLD CRISIS

Distinguished Guests

The International Missionary Conference that opened at Tambaram near Madras recently brought a stream of distinguished visitors into our midst. Several of them met Gandhiji by appointment in his village retreat at Sevagram to have an exchange of views with him on the eve of the Conference. Among them were Rev. William Paton, Secretary of the International Missionary Council, Rev. Leslie B. Moss, Secretary of the Conference of Missionary Societies in North America and an influential Church leader, and Dr. E. Smith of the British and Foreign Bible Society in London, who, besides his mission work, is an authority on anthropology, and Dr. John Mott, described by Rev. J. Z. Hodge as "the noblest Roman of them all", whose talk with Gandhiji has already been detailed in these columns by M. D.

Their Concern

The concern that filled them was, "How can humanity be saved from the impending international crisis that threatens to plunge it into an orgy of hate and violence?" Never, perhaps, has "civilization" been exposed to such a naked challenge of brute force or experienced in dealing with it, as Dr. Mott put it, such a "humiliation of impotence" as today. Not that humanity has not before known the phenomenon of the resurge of barbarism. The tornado of violence that overswept the earth in the wake of Tamerlane or Atilla and his Huns was not unlike what threatens the world today. But then the nations of the West

had not yet known the "weapon of the spirit" which later on was discovered to meet the menace. The tragedy today is that, although these nations received the message of Jesus 2,000 years ago, they never enforced it on anything like a universal scale, and therefore today find themselves bankrupt in the face of the impending doom. And so, men of light and leading among them feel the urge to seek a reinterpretation of that teaching in the light of present-day problems and how effectively to apply it to them.

India's non-violence movement has thus by sheer contrast come to acquire a world significance. Gandhiji's visitor friends were, therefore, naturally anxious to study and understand the inner springs of his non-violence and put him searching questions regarding the nature and meaning of his faith, and prayer and fasting and silence, and non-violent resistance as inculcated by him in its application to the problem of international anarchy and "gangsterism amongst nations". And finally they sought his advice as to how missionary effort, which they represented, could be co-ordinated with India's non-violence movement for the achievement of the common goal.

Leaving out the last question, which was exhaustively dealt with in the course of the talk, already reported, with Dr. Mott, I shall try to sum up here Gandhiji's answers to various questions that were discussed with him by the visitors, and supplement his remarks, where necessary, to further elucidate his standpoint, by his utterances since.

The Question of Motive

Going to the very rock-bottom, one of the questioners asked Gandhiji what his motive in life was, "the thing that leads us to do what we do", whether it was religious, or social or political.

"Purely religious," replied Gandhiji. "This was the question asked me by the late Mr. Montagu when I accompanied a deputation which was purely political. 'How have you, a social reformer,' he exclaimed, 'found your way into this crowd?' My reply was that it was only an extension of my social activity. I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself

with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics. The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of 'sound and fury signifying nothing'."

"Seeing the influence you wield over the people," he was next asked, "may we inquire whether it is the love of the cause or the love of the people that moves you?"

"Love of the people," was Gandhiji's unhesitating reply. "Cause without the people is a dead thing. Love of the people brought the problem of untouchability early into my life. My mother said, 'You must not touch this boy, he is an untouchable.' 'Why not?' I questioned back, and from that day my revolt began."

No Exclusion of Politics

"You would expect us Christians to copy your example. Should we allow our religious motive to plunge us into politics?"

"Those who come from different parts of the world into this country cannot say," replied Gandhiji, "'we shall have nothing to do with the politics of the country.' They would not be true to their faith, if they bargained with the government in order to supersede their fellow-feeling with the people. Supposing the government does a grievous wrong to the people of the soil and the missionaries are told that they must not lift a finger to prevent it, surely, the least they can do is to leave the country by way of signifying their displeasure at the perpetration of the wrong. If a missionary puts himself out for service, opportunities will come—today it may be in the economic sphere, tomorrow in the social, next time it may be in the political field. You cannot then say, 'I shall confine myself to this or that work and do nothing else.' When I went to South Africa I knew nothing about that country. I was bound to my client only. Yet, within seven days of my reaching there, I found that I had to deal with a situation too terrible for words."

Non-violence the Supreme Law

Gandhiji was next asked in what relation his non-violence stood to the pacifist attitude, "which we Westerners are trying to adopt without much success." It seemed strange to find ministers of religion asking Gandhiji, a layman, to explain as to whether and how moral force could make its impact against the materialist world.

"In my opinion," replied Gandhiji, "non-violence is not passivity in any shape or form. Non-violence, as I understand it, is the activest force in the world. Therefore, whether it is materialism or anything else, if non-violence does not provide an effective antidote, it is not the active force of my conception. Or, to put it conversely, if you bring me some conundrums that I cannot answer, I would say my non-violence is still defective. Non-violence is the supreme law. During my half a century of experience I have not yet come across a situation when I had to say that I was helpless, that I had no remedy in terms of non-violence.

The Jews and Non-violence

"Take the question of the Jews on which I have written. No Jew need feel helpless, if he takes to the non-violent way. A friend has written me a letter objecting that in that article I have assumed that the Jews have been violent. It is true that the Jews have not been actively violent in their own persons. But they called down upon the Germans the curses of mankind, and they wanted America and England to fight Germany on their behalf. If I hit my adversary, that is of course violence, but to be truly non-violent I must love him and pray for him even when he hits me. The Jews have not been actively non-violent, or in spite of the misdeeds of the dictators they would say, 'We shall suffer at their hand; they knew no better. But we shall suffer not in the manner in which they want us to suffer.' If even one Jew acted thus, he would save his self-respect and leave an example which, if it became infectious, would have the whole of Jewry and leave a rich heritage to mankind besides.

China's Ordeal

"What about China, you will ask. The Chinese have no designs upon other people. They have no desire for territory.

True, perhaps, China is not ready for such aggression ; perhaps, what looks like her pacifism is only indolence. In any case China's is not active non-violence. Her putting up a valiant defence against Japan is proof enough that China was never intentionally non-violent. That she is on the defensive is no answer in terms of non-violence. Therefore, when the time for testing her active non-violence came, she failed in the test. This is no criticism of China. I wish the Chinese success. According to the accepted standards her behaviour is strictly correct. But when the position is examined in terms of non-violence, I must say it is unbecoming for a nation of 400 millions, a nation as cultured as Japan, to repel Japanese aggression by resorting to Japan's own methods. If the Chinese had non-violence of my conception, there would be no use left for the latest machinery for destruction which Japan possesses. The Chinese would say to Japan, 'Bring all your machinery, we present half of our population to you. But the remaining two hundred millions won't bend their knee to you.' If the Chinese did that, Japan would become China's slave." And in support of his argument he referred to Shelley's celebrated lines from *The Mask of Anarchy*, "Ye are many, they are few":

Stand ye calm and resolute,
Like a forest close and mute,
With folded arms and looks which are
Weapons of unvanquished war.

And if then the tyrants dare,
Let them ride among you there,
Slash, and stab, and maim and hew,—
What they like, that let them do.

With folded arms and steady eyes,
And little fear, and less surprise,
Look upon them as they slay
Till their rage has died away.

Then they will return with shame
To the place from which they came,
And the blood thus shed will speak
In hot blushes on their cheek.

Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number—
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you--
Ye are many— they are few.

Mechanical Warfare and Non-Violence

"It has been objected, however," said Gandhiji, "that non-violence is all right in the case of the Jews because there is personal contact between the individual and his persecutors, but in China Japan comes with its long-range guns and aeroplanes. The person who rains death from above has never any chance of even knowing who and how many he has killed. How can non-violence combat aerial warfare, seeing that there are no personal contacts? The reply to this is that behind the death-dealing bomb there is the human hand that releases it, and behind that still is the human heart that sets the hand in motion. And at the back of the policy of terrorism is the assumption that terrorism if applied in a sufficient measure will produce the desired result, namely, bend the adversary to the tyrant's will. But supposing a people make up their mind that they will never do the tyrant's will, nor retaliate with the tyrant's own methods, the tyrant will not find it worth his while to go on with his terroism. If sufficient food is given to the tyrant, a time will come when he will have had more than surfeit. If all the mice in the world held conference together and resolved that they would no more fear the cat but all run into her mouth, the mice would live. I have actually seen a cat play with a mouse. She did not kill it outright but held it between her jaws, then released it, and again pounced upon it as soon as it made an effort to escape. In the end the mouse died out of sheer fright. The cat would have derived no sport, if the mouse had not tried to run away. I learnt the lesson of non-violence from my wife, when I tried to bend her to my will. Her determined resistance to my will on the one hand, and her quiet submission to the suffering my stupidity involved on the other, ultimately made me ashamed of myself, and cured me of my stupidity in thinking that I was born to rule over her, and in the end she became my teacher in non-violence. And what I did in South Africa was but an extension of the rule of *satyagraha* which she unwillingly practised in her own person."

What about Dictatorships?

But one of the visitors objected: "You do not know Hitler and Mussolini. They are incapable of any kind of moral response. They have no conscience, and they have made themselves

impervious to world opinion. Would it not be playing into the hands of these dictators if, for instance, the Czechs, following your advice, confronted them with non-violence? Seeing that dictatorships are unmoral by definition, would the law of moral conversion hold good in their case?"

"Your argument," replied Gandhiji, "presupposes that the dictators like Mussolini or Hitler are beyond redemption. But belief in non-violence is based on the assumption that human nature in its essence is one and therefore unfailingly responds to the advances of love. It should be remembered that they have up to now always found ready response to the violence that they have used. Within their experience, they have not come across organized non-violent resistance on an appreciable scale, if at all. Therefore it is not only highly likely, but I hold it to be inevitable, that they would recognize the superiority of non-violent resistance over any display of violence that they may be capable of putting forth. Moreover the non-violent technique that I have presented to the Czechs does not depend for its success on the goodwill of the dictators, for, a non-violent resister depends upon the unfailing assistance of God which sustains him throughout difficulties which would otherwise be considered insurmountable. His faith makes him indomitable."

The visitor retorted that these dictators wisely refrain from using force, but simply take possession of what they want. In the circumstances what can non-violent resisters do?

"Suppose," replied Gandhiji, "they come and occupy mines, factories and all sources of natural wealth belonging to the Czechs, then the following results can take place: (1) The Czechs may be annihilated for disobedience to orders. That would be a glorious victory for the Czechs and the beginning of the fall of Germany. (2) The Czechs might become demoralized in the presence of overwhelming force. This is a result common in all struggles. But if demoralization does take place, it would not be on account of non-violence, but it would be due to absence or inadequacy of non-violence. (3) The third thing that can take place is that Germany might use her new possessions for occupation by her surplus population. This, again, could not be avoided by offering violent resistance, for we have assumed that violent resistance is out of the question. Thus

non-violent resistance is the best method under all conceivable circumstances.

"I do not think that Hitler and Mussolini are after all so very indifferent to the appeal of world opinion. But today these dictators feel satisfaction in defying world opinion because none of the so-called Great Powers can come to them with clean hands, and they have a rankling sense of injustice done to their people by the Great Powers in the past. Only the other day an esteemed English friend owned to me that Nazi Germany was England's sin, and that it was the treaty of Versailles that made Hitler."

Visitor: "What can I as a Christian do to contribute to international peace? How can international anarchy be broken down and non-violence made effective for establishing peace? Subject nations apart, how can nations at the top be made to disarm themselves?"

Gandhiji: "You as a Christian can make an effective contribution by non-violent action even though it may cost you your all. Peace will never come until the Great Powers courageously decide to disarm themselves. It seems to me that recent events must force that belief on the Great Powers. I have an implicit faith — a faith that today burns brighter than ever, after half a century's experience of unbroken practice of non-violence — that mankind can only be saved through non-violence, which is the central teaching of the Bible as I have understood the Bible."

Pyarelal

Sevagram, 12-12-'38
Harijan, 24-12-1938

69

A JAPANESE VISITOR

We rarely have visitors from these totalitarian States. Capt. Strunk (who was later killed in a duel) was the last Nazi that visited Sevagram two years ago. We have not yet had a live Fascist, nor one representing militarist Japan. Mr. Takaoka, Member of the Japanese Parliament, who was on a visit here the other day, did not seem to come as one. He seemed to fear that whilst the Sino-Japanese War was going on, a visit from a Japanese was not likely to be welcome, but "after all, the war was not going to last for all time, and our duty is to find out how friendship could be established between Japan and India and China." At any rate he did not seem to be keen on defending the war of aggression, and simply confined himself to the question of unity between Japan and India. How could it be possible ?

In replying to him Gandhiji said : "It can be possible if Japan ceases to throw its greedy eyes on India. No doubt you do not bring your army to India, but you employ your matchless skill, and your ability to hide the truth, and your knowledge of the weaknesses of Indians, in order to flood India with your goods which are often flimsy. You have copied the rulers of India in their methods of exploitation and gone even one better. Now, from the Japanese standpoint, you cannot afford to lose the millions of rupees that you get from India. And if you cannot get them voluntarily, you will be quite capable of doing so by force of arms. But that would not be the way of bringing Japan and India together. What can bring them together is a moral bond based on mutual friendship.

"But there is no basis for that friendship today. Take your art. I like it. I read a fascinating account of Japan and Japanese life by Edwin Arnold many years ago. That picture has remained with me. I want to assimilate all your good points, but unfortunately no one comes here to give us the good things of Japan. You believe only in dumping your goods on us. How can I take a single yard of Japanese cloth, however fine and artistic it may be ? It is as poison to us, for it means starvation

for the poor people of India. You have left the West far behind in diplomacy, in skill, in cheap manufactures, in armed warfare, in exploitation. How then can there be friendship between you and us, so long as you see nothing wrong in exploitation ?"

Mr. Takaoka wondered if Gandhiji could give a message to the new party in Japan which stand for Asia for the Asiatics.

"I do not subscribe to the doctrine of Asia for the Asiatics, if it is meant as an anti-European combination," said Gandhiji. "How can we have Asia for the Asiatics unless we are content to let Asia remain a frog in the well ? But Asia cannot afford to remain a frog in the well. It has a message for the whole world, if it will only live up to it. There is the imprint of Buddhistic influence on the whole of Asia, which includes India, China, Japan, Burma, Ceylon and the Malaya States. I said to the Burmese and the Ceylonese that they were Buddhist in name ; India was Buddhist in reality. I would say the same thing to China and Japan. But, for Asia to be not for Asia but the whole world, it has to relearn the message of Buddha and deliver it to the world. Today it is being denied everywhere. In Burma every Buddhist monk is being dreaded by the Muslims. But why should anyone who is a true Buddhist be dreaded by anyone ?

"You will, therefore, see that I have no message to give you but this, that you must be true to your ancient heritage. The message is 2,500 years old, but it has not yet been truly lived. But what are 2,500 years ? They are but a speck in the cycle of time. The full flower of non-violence, which seems to be withering away, has yet to come to full bloom."

M. D.

Sevagram, 12-12-38
Harijan, 24-12-1938

70

IS NON-VIOLENCE INEFFECTIVE?

In dealing with my answer to the criticism that the Jews had been non-violent for 2,000 years, *The Statesman* says in the course of an editorial:

> "The whole world has heard of Pastor Niemoeller and the sufferings of the Lutheran Church; here many pastors and individual Christians bore themselves bravely before People's Courts, violence and threats; without retaliation they bore noble witness to the truth. And what change of heart is there in Germany? Buried in prisons and concentration camps are today, and have been for five years, members of the Bible Searchers' League who rejected Nazi militarism as conflicting with Christ's gospel of peace. And how many Germans know of them or, if they know, do anything about it?
>
> "Non-violence, whether of the weak or of the strong, seems, except in very special conditions, rather a personal than a social gospel. A man's salvation may be left to himself; politicians are concerned with causes, creeds and minorities. It is suggested by Mr. Gandhi that Herr Hitler would bow before a courage 'infinitely superior to that shown by his own Storm Troopers'. If that were so, one would have supposed that he would have paid tribute to such men as Herr Von Ossietzky. Courage to a Nazi, however, seems a virtue only when displayed by his own supporters: elsewhere it becomes 'the impudent provocation of Jewish-Marxist *canaille*'. Mr. Gandhi has produced his prescription in view of the inability of the Great Powers effectively to move in the matter, an inability we all deplore and would see remedied. His sympathy may do much for the comfort of the Jews, but seems likely to do less for their enlargement. Christ is the supreme example of non-violence, and the indignities heaped upon Him at His tortured death proved once and for all that in a worldly and temporal sense it can fail hopelessly."

I do not think that the sufferings of Pastor Niemoeller and others have been in vain. They have preserved their self-respect intact. They have proved that their faith was equal to any suffering. That they have not proved sufficient for melting Herr Hitler's heart merely shows that it is made of harder material than stone. But the hardest metal yields to sufficient heat.

Even so must the hardest heart melt before sufficiency of the heat of non-violence. And there is no limit to the capacity of non-violence to generate heat.

Every action is a resultant of a multitude of forces even of a contrary nature. There is no waste of energy. So we learn in the books on mechanics. This is equally true of human actions. The difference is that in the one case we generally know the forces at work, and when we do, we can mathematically foretell the resultant. In the case of human actions, they result from a concurrence of forces, of most of which we have no knowledge. But our ignorance must not be made to serve the cause of disbelief in the power of these forces. Rather is our ignorance a cause for greater faith. And non-violence being the mightiest force in the world and also the most elusive in its working, it demands the greatest exercise of faith. Even as we believe in God in faith, so have we to believe in non-violence in faith.

Herr Hitler is but one man enjoying no more than the average span of life. He would be a spent force, if he had not the backing of his people. I do not despair of his responding to human suffering even though caused by him. But I must refuse to believe that the Germans as a nation have no heart or markedly less than the other nations of the earth. They will some day or other rebel against their own adored hero, if he does not wake up betimes. And when he or they do, we shall find that the sufferings of the Pastor and his fellow-workers had not a little to do with the awakening.

An armed conflict may bring disaster to German arms; it cannot change the German heart even as the last defeat did not. It produced a Hitler vowed to wreak vengeance on the victors. And what a vengeance it is! My answer, therefore, must be the answer that Stephenson gave to his fellow-workers who had despaired of ever filling the deep pit that made the first railway possible. He asked his co-workers of little faith to have more faith and go on filling the pit. It was not bottomless, it must be filled. Even so I do not despair because Herr Hitler's or the German heart has not yet melted. On the contrary I plead for more suffering and still more till the melting has become visible to the naked eye. And even as the Pastor has covered himself with glory, a single Jew bravely standing up and refusing to bow

to Hitler's decree will cover himself with glory and lead the way to the deliverance of the fellow-Jews.

I hold that non-violence is not merely a personal virtue. It is also a social virtue to be cultivated like the other virtues. Surely society is largely regulated by the expression of non-violence in its mutual dealings. What I ask for is an extension of it on a larger, national and international scale.

I was unprepared to find the view expressed by *The Statesman* writer that the example of Christ proved once and for all that in a worldly and temporal sense it can fail hopelessly!! Though I cannot claim to be a Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in non-violence which rules all my actions worldly and temporal. And I know that there are hundreds of Christians who believe likewise. Jesus lived and died in vain, if he did not teach us to regulate the whole of life by the eternal law of love.

On the train to Bardoli, 2-1-'39
Harijan, 7-1-1939

71

CHINA AND JAPAN

But that discussion could not enthuse Gandhiji. He went straight to the question on which he wanted to hear first-hand from Dr. Kagawa. "What is the feeling of people in Japan about the war?"

"I am rather a heretic in Japan," said Dr. Kagawa. "Rather than I express my views, I would like to learn from you what you would do if you were in my position."

"It would be presumptuous for me to express my views."

"No, I would like very much to know what you would do."

"I would declare my heresies and be shot. I would put the co-operatives and all your work in one scale, and put the honour of your nation in the other, and if you found that the honour was being sold, I should ask you to declare your views against Japan and in so doing make Japan live through your death. But, for

this, inner conviction is necessary. I do not know that I should be able to do all that I have said if I were in your position, but I must give you my opinion since you have asked for it."

"The conviction is there. But friends have been asking me to desist."

"Well, don't listen to friends when the Friend inside you says, 'Do this.' And friends, however good, can sometimes well deceive us. They cannot argue otherwise. They would ask you to *live* and do your work. The same appeal was made to me when I took the decision to go to jail. But I did not listen to friends, with the result that I found the glow of freedom when I was confined within the four solid walls of prison. I was inside a dark cell, but I felt that I could see everything from within those walls, and nothing from outside."

Dr. Kagawa seemed to shrink from continuing this discussion. There was indeed no room for it. The conviction was there, but it could fructify only in its proper time. So he switched on again to his theme of co-operation: "Have you some irrigation co-operatives in India?" But Gandhiji was full of other things.

"I do not think so," Gandhiji replied. "Of course you have all these things. You have done marvellous things, and we have many things to learn from you. But how can we understand this swallowing alive of China, drugging her with poison, and so many other horrid things that I read about in a book called *What War Means* which Pandit Jawaharlal has given me? How could you have committed all these atrocities? And then your great poet calls it a war of humanity and a blessing to China!"

Harijan, 21-1-1939 M.D.

72

A WORLD IN AGONY

I

China's Travail

The last day of the dying year and the New Year's day brought to Sevagram a unique gathering of representatives of various nations who had been to the Tambaram Conference. "This world in miniature," as Gandhiji described them, included delegates from three continents. There were Rev. S. S. Tema of D. R. Mission, Johannesburg, Rev. Thompson D. Sankange of Kwende Mission, S. Rhodesia, and Miss Mina Soga, the first Negro woman to visit India in a representative capacity. There was too a Japanese delegate, M. S. Murao from Tokyo. From China there were Rev. Timothy Tingfang Lew, member, Legislative Yuan of the National Government of China, Y. T. Wu, Editor-in-Chief of Association Press of the National Y. M. C. A., Shanghai, and formerly Chairman of the Fellowship of Reconciliation in China. And lastly, there was P. C. Hsu, philosopher and author of several works on Confucius, rural reconstruction, etc. At one time professor in Shanghai University, he is at present helping in establishing a network of *ashrams* in China where the scholars set before themselves the ideal of "toil unsevered from tranquillity", and themselves do all odd and so-called menial jobs like cleaning, sweeping, etc.

Most of them, as devout Christians, had a strong leaning towards pacifism, and the representatives of the Chinese and the Negro races, having felt the iron heel of oppression of the Japanese militarism and the militarism of the White races respectively, were deeply interested in the method of non-violence as a weapon for resisting militaristic aggression. The Chinese delegate had come fresh from the theatre of war, and had experienced the horrors of modern warfare in all its nakedness. They felt themselves on the horns of a dilemma.

Torn between their horror of a patriotic war and their just resentment against the unwarranted invasion of their liberties, they poured out their spiritual anguish before Gandhiji, and

asked him, as the apostle of non-violence, to show them the way how to make non-violence effective.

Rev. Lew's Dilemma

Rev. Lew, who saw Gandhiji separately on the first day, in conveying thanks for the Indian Medical Mission to help the Chinese, remarked:

"We appreciate it as an expression of India's sympathy and goodwill towards China. China's struggle is not merely for China but for the whole of Asia. It is for Japan too. The Japanese think they are invincible because they defeated us in 1885, but we know that even now their people are paying a heavy price for this war of aggression, in the form of high taxation, etc.

Cultural Destruction?

"We are not afraid of material destruction, distressing though it is, but of cultural destruction. The first bomb in Shanghai hit a library. Colleges have been wiped out. Professors have been killed. New education has been disorganized and forced to migrate into the interior.

"Even worse is the moral injury they have done us," he continued. And he gave a lurid description of how a systematic attempt is being made to force the drug evil upon China, which they had been, for the last twenty years, trying to fight tooth and nail. "When they occupied Peking they opened 50 new brothels there, filling them with Korean girls. The army of occupation rapes women everywhere, the figure for Peking alone being anything between 8,000 to 20,000 according to various estimates. In Shanghai the revenue in one month from gambling and drug shops that have been opened under Japanese authority amounted to 250 thousand dollars. The morale of the whole nation is being sapped. There is no hope once you are enslaved by the drug habit on a nation-wide scale. Supposing we win the war after 10 or 15 years, we may restore material devastation, but how shall we redeem our young generation?

"We want your message. We have translated your Autobiography into Chinese. We look to you for spiritual guidance."

Culture is Bomb-proof

Gandhiji replied: "I was once asked by a Chinese friend from Shantiniketan to give a message to the Chinese people. I

had to ask him to excuse me. I gave him my reasons. If I merely said I sympathized with the Chinese in their struggle, it would be not of much value as coming from me. I should love to be able to say to the Chinese definitely that their salvation lay only through non-violent technique. But then it is not for a person like me, who is outside the fight, to say to a people who are engaged in a life and death struggle, 'Not this way, but that.' They would not be ready to take up the new method, and they would be unsettled in the old. My interference would only shake them and confuse their minds.

"But whilst I have no 'message' to send to the Chinese people who are engaged in fighting, I have no hesitation in presenting my viewpoint to you. I was almost going to ask you as to what you meant by being culturally ruined. I should be sorry to learn that Chinese culture resided in brick and mortar or in huge tomes which the moth can eat. A nation's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people. Chinese culture is Chinese only to the extent that it has become part and parcel of Chinese life. Your saying, therefore, that your culture and your morals are in danger of being destroyed, leads one to think that the reform movement in your country was only skin-deep. Gambling had not disappeared from the people's hearts. It was kept down not by the tone set by society, but by the penalty of the law. The heart continued to gamble. Japan is of course to blame and must be blamed for what it has done or is doing. But then Japan is just now like the wolf whose business it is to make short work of the sheep. Blaming the wolf would not help the sheep much. The sheep must learn not to fall into the clutches of the wolf.

"If even a few of you took to non-violence, they would stand forth as living monuments of Chinese culture and morals. And then, even if China were overwhelmed on the battlefield, it would be well with China in the end, because it would at the same time be receiving a message which contains a promise of hope and deliverance. Japan cannot force drugs down unwilling throats at the point of the bayonet. It can only set up temptations. You cannot teach people to resist these temptations by replying to Japanese force by force. Whatever else force may or may not be able to achieve, it cannot safeguard Chinese morals or save Chinese culture.

"If you feel the truth of my remarks, you will become a living message to China. You will then tell the Chinese people, 'No matter what material destruction Japan inflicts, it cannot bring about China's cultural destruction. Our people must be sufficiently educated and warned to resist all the temptations that Japan may devise. Monuments and cities may be razed to the ground. They are but a passing show, that is going one day to be claimed by time as its own. If they are destroyed by the Japanese, it will only be a morsel taken out of time's mouth. The Japanese cannot corrupt our soul. If the soul of China is injured, it will not be by Japan.'"

Boycott of Japan

The Chinese friend was of opinion that only the economic collapse of Japan could save China. They wanted to know what the prospects of a boycott of Japanese goods by India were.

"I wish," replied Gandhiji, "I could say that there was any great hope. Our sympathies are with you, but they have not stirred us to our very depths, or else we should have boycotted all Japanese goods, especially Japanese cloth. Japan is not only conquering you, but it is trying to conquer us too by its cheap, flimsy machine-made goods. The sending of the Medical Mission was good as a gesture of friendship and goodwill which there are in abundance. But that does not give me much satisfaction when I know we could do much more. We too are a big nation like you. If we told the Japanese, 'We are not going to import a single yard of your calico nor export any of our cotton to you,' Japan would think twice before proceeding with its aggression."

Non-violent Technique

This talk was followed by a discussion later with the whole group. The Chinese delegates put searching questions. There was an eagerness minutely to study "the mind and face" of non-violence. One of them asked, "Is it not necessary that individuals should practise non-violence first in their own person, in their relations with other individuals?" And by way of illustration he described how, even after he came to have the conviction that non-violence was the law of life, for years he refused to preach its use in outer affairs to others. "I said I would first try myself to live it and perfect myself in its practice. I began by making a resolve not to answer back or refute

criticism directed against me. After seven years I gave a report of my experience to my students. I cannot say that in practice my method has always answered. So I say to myself, 'Patience, I must try again.'"

"It would be a delusion to think otherwise," replied Gandhiji. "If one does not practise non-violence in one's personal relations with others and hopes to use it in bigger affairs, one is vastly mistaken. Non-violence like charity must begin at home. But if it is necessary for the individual to be trained in non-violence, it is even more necessary for the nation to be trained likewise. One cannot be non-violent in one's own circle and violent outside it. Or else, one is not truly non-violent even in one's own circle; often the non-violence is only in appearance. It is only when you meet with resistance, as for instance, when a thief or a murderer appears, that your non-violence is put on its trial. You either try or should try to oppose the thief with his own weapons, or you try to disarm him by love. Living among decent people, your conduct may not be described as non-violent. Mutual forbearance is not non-violence. Immediately, therefore, you get the conviction that non-violence is the law of life, you have to practise it towards those who act violently towards you; and the law must apply to nations as to individuals. Training is no doubt necessary. And beginnings are always small. But if the conviction is there, the rest will follow."

Another question was: "In the practice of non-violence, is there not danger of developing a 'martyrdom complex' or pride creeping in?"

Gandhiji: "If one has that pride and egoism, there is no non-violence. Non-violence is impossible without humility. My own experience is that whenever I have acted non-violently I have been led to it and sustained in it by the higher promptings of an unseen power. Through my own will I should have miserably failed. When I first went to jail, I quailed at the prospect. I had heard terrible things about jail life. But I had faith in God's protection. Our experience was that those who went to jail in a prayerful spirit came out victorious, those who had gone in their own strength failed. There is no room for self-pitying in it either, when you say God is giving you the strength. Self-pity comes when you do a thing for which you expect re-

cognition from others. But here there is no question of recognition."

To Fight or Not to Fight

Another friend thus placed his dilemma: "I am a firm believer in non-violence. Eight years ago I read your *Experiments with Truth* and immediately became converted to the way of life you have there advocated. Shortly after that I translated the book into Chinese. And then came the Japanese invasion. My faith in non-violence was put to a severe test and I was caught in a dilemma. On the one hand I felt I could not preach non-violence to my people who were never militaristic but who now believed that resistance with force was the only way out. It was the best thing they knew, and I believe with you that 'I would rather risk the use of force a thousand times than let my people lose their manhood.' But on the other hand, when I try to take a sympathetic attitude and try to do something helpful in such a situation, I find I am giving moral and material support directly and indirectly to something which is against the highest that I know. There seems to be no way out of this dilemma because I cannot live in a vacuum and anything I do will work one way or the other. While I can believe without reserve in non-violence in personal relationships, even though I fall far short of it, I cannot feel in the same way when I am faced with a national situation in which the great majority of the people have not even heard of the way of non-violence."

The Non-violent Equivalent

"Your's is a difficult situation," replied Gandhiji. "Such difficulties have confronted me more than once. I took part on the British side in the Boer War by forming an ambulance corps. I did likewise at the time of what has been described as the Zulu Revolt. The third time was during the Great War. I believed in non-violence then. My motive was wholly non-violent. That seemingly inconsistent conduct gave me strength. My example cannot be used as a precedent for others to follow. Looking back upon my conduct on those three occasions, I have no sense of remorse. I know this too that my non-violent strength did not suffer diminution because of those experiences. The actual work I was called upon to do was purely humanitarian, especially during the Zulu Revolt. I and my companions were privileged

to nurse the wounded Zulus back to life. It is reasonable to suggest that but for our services some of them would have died. I cite this experience not to justify my participation, however indirect it was. I cite it to show that I came through that experience with greater non-violence and with richer love for the great Zulu race. And I had an insight into what war by White men against coloured races meant.

"The lesson to be learnt from it by you is that, placed as you are in a position of hopeless minority, you may not ask your people to lay down their arms unless their hearts are changed and by laying down their arms they feel the more courageous and brave. But whilst you may not try to wean people from war, you will in your person live non-violence in all its completeness and refuse all participation in war. You will develop love for the Japanese in your hearts. You will examine yourself whether you can really love them, whether you have not some ill-will towards them for all the harm they are doing. It is not enough to love them by remembering their virtues. You must be able to love them in spite of all their misdeeds. If you have that love for the Japanese in your hearts, you will proceed to exhibit in your conduct that higher form of courage which is the hall-mark of true non-violence and which your Chinese friends will not fail to detect and recognize as such. You will not wish success to Japanese arms because you 'love' the Japanese. At the same time you will not pray for the success of Chinese arms. It is very difficult to judge, when both sides are employing weapons of violence, which side 'deserves' to succeed. You will, therefore, pray only that the right should prevail. Whilst you will keep yourself aloof from all violence, you will not shirk danger. You will serve friend and foe alike with a reckless disregard for your life. You will rush forth if there is an outbreak of an epidemic or a fire to be combated, and distinguish yourself by your surpassing courage and non-violent heroism. But you will refuse to call the curses of heaven upon the Japanese. If by chance some Japanese soldiers or airmen fall into the hands of the Chinese and are in danger of being lynched by an infuriated Chinese mob or otherwise ill-treated, you will plead for them with your own people and, if necessary, even protect them with your life. You know the story of Emily Hobhouse. Though an Englishwoman,

she courageously went to the Boer concentration camps. She exhorted the Boers never to lose heart, and it is said that, if she had not steeled the hearts of the Boer women as she did, the war might have taken a different turn. She was full of wrath against her own people for whom she had not a good word to say. You would not copy her unmeasured wrath which somewhat vitiated her non-violence, but you will copy her love for the 'enemy' that made her denounce the misdeeds of her own countrymen. Your example will affect the Chinese, and might even shame some Japanese who will become bearers of your message among the Japanese.

"A very slow process, you will perhaps say. Yes, possibly, under the existing adverse circumstances to begin with. But it will gather momentum and speed in an incalculable manner as you proceed. I am an irrepressible optimist. My optimism rests on my belief in the infinite possibilities of the individual to develop non-violence. The more you develop it in your own being, the more infectious it becomes till it overwhelms your surroundings and by and by might oversweep the world."

"I, a believer in non-violence, often find that I am actuated by mixed motives. So does a war General have mixed motives. Is it not possible to fight, with love for the enemy in one's heart? May we not shoot out of love?"

Gandhiji: "We do often have mixed motives. But that would not be non-violence. There can be degrees in violence, not in non-violence. The constant effort of the votary of non-violence is to purge himself of hatred towards the so-called enemy. There is no such thing as shooting out of love in the way you suggest."

Can Non-violence Be Organized?

The last to place before Gandhiji his problem was Mr. P. C. Hsu. He had been writing since 1930 to meet Gandhiji. He had graduated in the same year in which Japan presented her twentyone demands to China. He was at that time a bitter nationalist. After three years of contact with the work of the Fellowship of Reconciliation among the students, he changed his views, and began to make a distinction between the Japanese people and the Japanese military machine. He became a believer in an international lining up of liberal elements. "I can say honestly," he told Gandhiji, "I have no feeling of hatred

towards the Japanese people, but I feel their military system is an evil. I used to think that all that was needed to end it was education in truth. I had hoped that at Tambaram, at any rate, an international link between the two countries on the basis of mutual goodwill and peace would be forged. But I was disillusioned. I found that very little could be achieved immediately." He had tried too to establish peace groups as an agency for carrying on the peace work, but found that confronted by a crisis they were reduced to impotence and could offer little effective check. "Our difficulty is this," he concluded. "While sincerely believing in non-violence, we have not found a way of making it effective."

"Should that present a difficulty?" exclaimed Gandhiji. "A person who realizes a particular evil of his time and finds that it overwhelms him, dives deep in his own heart for inspiration, and when he gets it, he presents it to others. Meetings and group organizations are all right. They are of some help, but very little. They are like the scaffolding that an architect erects — a temporary and makeshift expedient. The thing that really matters is an invincible faith that cannot be quenched.

"Faith can be developed. Only, the way it can be developed and in which it works differs from that in the case of violence. You cannot develop violence through prayer. Faith, on the other hand, cannot be developed except through prayer.

"Non-violence succeeds only when we have a living faith in God. Buddha, Jesus, Mahomed — they were all warriors of peace in their own style. We have to enrich the heritage left by these world teachers. God has His own wonderful way of executing His plans and choosing His instruments. The Prophet and Abu Bakr trapped in a cave were saved from their persecutors by a spider which had woven its web across the mouth of that cave. All the world teachers, you should know, began with a zero!!"

Gandhiji's interlocutor seemed to be satisfied. But he had another doubt. "Whilst we have isolated individuals who have the mind of Jesus," he observed to Gandhiji, "because they are not united, not organized, theirs remains a mere cry in the wilderness. The question that arises in my mind is: Can love be organized? and if so, how?"

Gandhiji: "Organization in the orthodox sense may not be

possible. But there is no bar to united non-violent action. I am trying to show by a series of experiments that it is possible. It has its own technique."

If China Wins

"If China wins the war," finally asked the friend, "will she be worse off or better off for her victory?"

"If China wins," replied Gandhiji, "and copies Japanese methods, she will beat Japan hollow at her own game. But the victory of China will not mean a new hope for the world. For China will then be a multiple edition of Japan. But whether China wins or goes down, your line of action is clear. If China is defeated on the battlefield, your non-violence will remain undaunted and will have done its work. If China wins, you will go to the gallows in the attempt to wean China from copying Japan's methods."

Bardoli, 15-1-'39 PYARELAL
Harijan, 28-1-1939

73

A WORLD IN AGONY

II

A Programme for Africa

The future programme of action for the emancipation of the Negro race in the Union of South Africa was the theme of a discussion that Rev. S. S. Tema of D. R. Mission, Johannesburg, had with Gandhiji at Wardha. Rev. Tema is himself a Negro and a member of the African Congress. He is engaged in social work among his people. There are ten million Negroes in South Africa as against two million Whites and 75,000 Indians. Like other coloured and oppressed races of the world, the Negro population of South Africa too is developing a race consciousness which has been intensified by the rape of Abyssinia by Italy. The impact of White civilization has done the Negro little good. The Christian missionary went to him with the Bible. But while the Sermon on the Mount has remained a dead letter

so far as the conduct of the Whites towards him was concerned, the drink habit and the disease that followed in its wake have spread like a veldt fire among the natives' kraals and worked havoc there. They have realized too, after bitter experience, the utter futility of armed resistance. The growth of consciousness among them has, therefore, only led to a deepening of their despair. "We seem to be up against a stone wall. We are crushed down by a power that is pitiless and inexorable as fate. There is nothing that can avail us. We seem doomed,"— was the lament poured out to Gandhiji once by a Negro friend who saw him at Sabarmati ten years ago. Since then the success of the non-violence programme of the Congress has brought to some of their leaders a fresh glimmer of hope, and Rev. Tema was anxious to learn the secret of that success. "How can my people make their Congress as successful as the Indian National Congress ?" he asked Gandhiji.

"The Congress," replied Gandhiji, "became successful for the simple reason that it was inaugurated by the most selfless and cultured people that could be found in that age. They made themselves the representatives of the people, and captured their imagination by reason of service and self-sacrifice. They were from the people and of the people." After describing in some detail the services and the evolution of the Congress as a democratic organization, Gandhiji proceeded: "You have not, as far as I am aware, a band of Africans who would be content to work and live in impecuniosity. Among those who are educated there is not that absolute selflessness. Again, while most of your leaders are Christians, the vast mass of the Bantus and Zulus are not Christians. You have adopted European dress and manners, and have as a result become strangers in the midst of your own people. Politically, that is a disadvantage. It makes it difficult for you to reach the heart of the masses. "You must not be afraid of being 'Bantuized' or feel ashamed of carrying an assagai or of going about with only a tiny clout round your loins. A Zulu or a Bantu is a well-built man and need not be ashamed of showing his body. He need not dress like you. You must become Africans once more."

A Non-White United Front ?

Of late there has been some talk of forming an Indo-African United Non-White Front in South Africa. "What do you think

about it ?" asked Rev. Tema. "It will be a mistake," replied Gandhiji. "You will be pooling together not strength but weakness. You will best help one another by each standing on his own legs. The two cases are different. The Indians are a microscopic minority. They can never be a 'menace' to the White population. You, on the other hand, are the sons of the soil who are being robbed of your inheritance. You are bound to resist that. Yours is a far bigger issue. It ought not to be mixed up with that of the Indians. This does not preclude the establishment of the friendliest relations between the two races. The Indians can co-operate with you in a number of ways. They can help you by always acting on the square towards you. They may not put themselves in opposition to your legitimate aspirations, or run you down as 'savages' while exalting themselves as 'cultured' people, in order to secure concessions for themselves at your expense."

Rev. Tema: "What sort of relations would you favour between these two races ?"

Gandhiji: "The closest possible. But while I have abolished all distinction between an African and an Indian, that does not mean that I do not recognize the difference between them. The different races of mankind are like different branches of a tree — once we recognize the common parent stock from which we are sprung, we realize the basic unity of the human family, and there is no room left for enmities and unhealthy competition."

Rev. Tema: "Should we adopt violence or non-violence as a means for our deliverance ?"

Gandhiji: "Certainly, non-violence under all circumstances. But you must have a living faith in it. Even when there is impenetrable darkness surrounding you, you must not abandon hope. A person who believes in non-violence believes in a living God. He cannot accept defeat. Therefore, my advice is non-violence all the time, but non-violence of the brave, not of the coward."

"Your example," continued Rev. Tema, "has shed so much influence upon us that we are thinking whether it would not be possible for one or two of our young men, who we are hoping will become leaders, to come to you for training."

"It is quite a good and sound idea," replied Gandhiji.

Rev. Tema: "Do you think Christianity can bring salvation to Africa ?"

Gandhiji: "Christianity, as it is known and practised today, cannot bring salvation to your people. It is my conviction that those who today call themselves Christians do not know the true message of Jesus. I witnessed some of the horrors that were perpetrated on the Zulus during the Zulu Rebellion. Because one man, Bambatta, their chief, had refused to pay his tax, the whole race was made to suffer. I was in charge of an ambulance corps. I shall never forget the lacerated backs of Zulus who had received stripes and were brought to us for nursing because no White nurse was prepared to look after them. And yet those who perpetrated all those cruelties called themselves Christians. They were 'educated', better dressed than the Zulus, but not their moral superiors."

Rev. Tema had one more question to ask. "Whenever a leader comes up in our midst, he flops down after a while. He either becomes ambitious after money or succumbs to the drink habit or some other vice and is lost to us. How shall we remedy this?"

"The problem is not peculiar to you," replied Gandhiji. "Your leadership has proved ineffectual because it was not sprung from the common people. If you belong to the common people, live like them and think like them, they will make common cause with you. If I were in your place, I would not ask a single African to alter his costume and make himself peculiar. It does not add a single inch to his moral stature."

Gandhiji's Dream

Rev. Tema wanted to know if Gandhiji had a message to send through him to the Indian community in South Africa. But Gandhiji had none at that time. An opportunity presented itself a few days later when a group of South Africa born Indian boys came to see him at Bardoli. They had come to pursue their medical studies in India and sought his help to gain admission to some suitable medical college or colleges in the country. Gandhiji had known the parents and guardians of some of them in South Africa as his clients. These young men also discussed with him the question of the formation of a Non-White United Front in South Africa.

"What should we, South Africa borns, do to preserve our Indian culture in our country of adoption?" they next asked

Gandhiji. "What other languages would you ask us to learn besides English ?"

Gandhiji answered by first twitting them for giving the first place to English. He advised them instead to learn Hindustani, which should contain all words of Sanskritic as well as Persian or Arabic origin, that are used by the man in the street. The Hindus dared not neglect the study of Sanskrit, nor the Muslims of Arabic, not only because the study of these languages was necessary to give them access to their scriptures in the original, but also because these two tongues contained the grandest poetry that the world has ever produced. "But above all," he concluded, "you should jealously retain the essential simplicity and spirituality which is the hall-mark of Indian culture."

Their other question was whether they should carry on the struggle for their rights in South Africa through *satyagraha* or through constitutional agitation.

"If the South African Indian community had guts in them, I would say *satyagraha*, and they are bound to win. I am hoping that some day from among Indian youths born in South Africa a person will arise who will stand up for the rights of his countrymen domiciled there, and make the vindication of those rights his life's mission. He will be so pure, so cultured, so truthful and so dignified in his bearing that he will disarm all opposition. The Whites will then say, 'If all Indians were like him, we should have no objection to giving them an equal status with us.' But he will answer, 'It is not enough that there is one representative of the Indian community whom you are ready to recognize as your equal. What I am, other countrymen of mine too can be, if, instead of calling them names and putting them under all sorts of disabilities, you give them a sporting chance in the matter of educational and other facilities which are today denied them.' Such a one, when he appears, will not need to be coached by me. He will assert himself by his sheer genius."

Bardoli, 6-2-'39 PYARELAL

Harijan, 18-2-1939

74

WORKING OF NON-VIOLENCE

"I have been very much interested in reading the recent numbers of *Harijan* and your observations on the European crisis and the N. W. F. Province. But there is one aspect of the non-violence problem, which I should have discussed with you at Sevagram if there had been time, to which you seldom or never refer. You say that non-violent non-cooperation, as you have developed it, is the answer to the violence which is now threatening the whole world with ruin. There is no doubt as to the immense effect such spirit and action could produce. But must not the non-violent spirit of selfless love for all, enemies and friends alike, express itself, if it is to succeed, in a liberal, democratic and constitutional form of government? Society cannot exist without law and government. International peace cannot exist unless the nations accept a system of constitutional government which will give them unity and law, and end anarchy among them. No doubt some day the law of God will be so 'written on the hearts and minds' of men that they become individually the expression of it, and will need no human law or government. But that is the end. The beginning of progress towards that heavenly goal must take the form at first of a willingness among races, religions and nations to unite under a single constitution, through which their unity and membership one of another is established, the laws under which they live are promulgated after public discussion and by some form of majority decision, and are enforced, where it is not voluntarily obeyed, not by war but by police force, where persuasion and example have not sufficed. As between sovereign nations the operation of a constructive non-violence spirit must lead to some form of federation. It cannot succeed until it has done so. The proof that it exists effectively will be the appearance of a federal system. Thus the only real solution for the European problem is the federation of its 25 peoples and nations under a single democratic constitution which will create a government which can look at and legislate for the problems of Europe, not as a set of rival and conflicting nations but as a single whole with autonomous parts. In the same way the only solution of the Indian problem is the substitution of a democratic constitution for the control of Great Britain. And what is true for Europe and India is true, in the long run, for the whole world and is the only final method of ending war.

Non-violent non-cooperation may be the best, perhaps the only, method of bringing about the change of mind and heart

which will make acceptance of a federal democratic constitution by the nations possible. But attainment to democratic federation is the necessary attainment whereby its success is assured and without which it cannot succeed. It is always a matter of interest and indeed of surprise to me that you appear to think that non-violent non-cooperation is enough in itself, and that you never proclaim that a democratic system of government unifying men, races, religions and nations is the goal to which it must lead, though that attainment is only possible as the result of a spiritual change of heart and cannot be reached by force or violence or chicanery.

I do not write this as a kind of indirect argument for the Indian constitution, though it obviously has a bearing on that problem also. The Government of India Act is clearly a very imperfect application of the principle of democratic federation and must necessarily evolve rapidly if it is to work. The main argument I have always urged for it is that in present conditions it represents the only constitutional compromise uniting Provinces, States, Moslems and Hindus which can be made to work, and that it has far more seeds of evolution within it than is generally recognized. If your spiritual gospel informed the people, it would rapidly and easily evolve. My object is not to elicit any opinion from you about the constitutional problem, but an answer to the larger question set forth in the early part of the letter."

Thus writes Lord Lothian. The letter was received early in January, but urgent matters prevented my dealing earlier with the important question raised in it.

I have purposely refrained from dealing with the nature of government in a society based deliberately on non-violence. All society is held together by non-violence, even as the earth is held in her position by gravitation. But when the law of gravitation was discovered the discovery yielded results of which our ancestors had no knowledge. Even so when society is deliberately constructed in accordance with the law of non-violence, its structure will be different in material particulars from what it is today. But I cannot say in advance what the government based wholly on non-violence will be like.

What is happening today is disregard of the law of non-violence and enthronement of violence as if it were an eternal law. The democracies, therefore, that we see at work in England, America and France are only so-called, because they are no less based on violence than Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy or even Soviet Russia. The only difference is that the violence

of the last three is much better organized than that of the three democratic powers. Nevertheless we see today a mad race for outdoing one another in the matter of armaments. And if, when the clash comes, as it is bound to come one day, the democracies win, they will do so only because they will have the backing of their peoples who imagine that they have a voice in their own government, whereas in the other three cases the peoples might rebel against their own dictatorships.

Holding the view that without the recognition of non-violence on a national scale there is no such thing as a constitutional or democratic government, I devote my energy to the propagation of non-violence as the law of our life — individual, social, political, national and international. I fancy that I have seen the light, though dimly. I write cautiously, for I do not profess to know the whole of the law. If I know the successes of my experiments, I know also my failures. But the successes are enough to fill me with undying hope.

I have often said that, if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself. Non-violence is the means; the end for every nation is complete independence. There will be an international league only when all the nations, big or small, composing it are fully independent. The nature of that independence will correspond to the extent of non-violence assimilated by the nations concerned. One thing is certain. In a society based on non-violence, the smallest nation will feel as tall as the tallest. The idea of superiority and inferiority will be wholly obliterated.

It follows from this that the Government of India Act is merely a makeshift and has to give way to an act coined by the nation itself. So far as provincial autonomy is concerned, it has been found possible to handle it somewhat. My own experience of its working is by no means happy. The Congress governments have not that non-violent hold over the people that I had expected they would have.

But the federal structure is inconceivable to me because it contemplates a partnership, however loose, among dissimilars. How dissimilar the States are is being demonstrated in an ugliness for which I was unprepared. Therefore the federal structure, as conceived by the Government of India Act, I hold to be an utter impossibility. Thus the conclusion is irresistible that

for one like me, wedded to non-violence, constitutional or democratic government is a distant dream so long as non-violence is not recognized as a living force, an inviolable creed, not a mere policy. While I prate about universal non-violence, my experiment is confined to India. If it succeeds, the world will accept it without effort. There is, however, a big *BUT*. The pause does not worry me. My faith is brightest in the midst of impenetrable darkness.

Sevagram, 6-2-'39
Harijan, 11-2-1939

75

NO APOLOGY

I have two letters from Jewish friends protesting against a remark of mine in a dialogue reported in *Harijan* over the Jewish question. Here is one of the letters :

> "My attention has been called to a paragraph in *Harijan* of December 24th, 1938, in which you are reported to have said that 'The Jews called down upon the Germans the curses of mankind, and they wanted America and England to fight Germany on their behalf.' I can hardly doubt that you have been misreported, for there is nothing that could possibly justify such a statement. But as the paragraph much distressed me, I should be glad to receive from you a word of reassurance."

I am sorry to say that I cannot give the reassurance required. For I did make the remark put into my mouth by Shri Pyarelal. Hardly a paper comes to me from the West which does not describe the agony of the Jews who demand retribution by the democratic powers for German atrocities. Nor do I see anything wrong in the attitude. The Jews are not angels. My point was that they were not non-violent in the sense meant by me. Their non-violence had and has no love in it. It is passive. They do not resist because they know that they cannot resist with any degree of success. In their place, unless there were active non-violence in me, I should certainly call down upon my persecutors the curses of Heaven. It is not contended by my correspondents that the German Jews do not want the big powers like England, America and France to prevent the

atrocities, if need be, even by war against Germany. I happen to have a Jewish friend living with me. He has an intellectual belief in non-violence. But he says he cannot pray for Hitler. He is so full of anger over the German atrocities that he cannot speak of them with restraint. I do not quarrel with him over his anger. He wants to be non-violent, but the sufferings of fellow-Jews are too much for him to bear. What is true of him is true of thousands of Jews who have no thought even of 'loving the enemy'. With them, as with millions, 'revenge is sweet, to forgive is divine.'

Sevagram, 5-2-'39
Harijan, 18-2-1939

76

WHAT TO DO?

Here is an important letter from a principal who wishes to remain anonymous:

> "A troubled conscience seeks the reasoned opinion of others to help to solve the following pressing question: Is the carrying out of the pledge of the Peace Pledge Union (the late Dick Sheppard's organization for opposing war by the refusal to resort to violence under any circumstances whatever) a right and practicable course of action in the present conditions of our world?
>
> On the side of 'Yea' there are the following arguments:
>
> 1. The world's greatest spiritual teachers have taught and exemplified in their own lives that an evil thing can only be destroyed by good means, and never by evil means, and any sort of violence (particularly that of war, even solely in so-called self-defence) is undoubtedly an evil means, whatever may be the motive. Violence is, therefore, *always* wrong.
>
> 2. The real causes of the present violence and misery can never be removed by war. This was proved to the hilt in the last 'war to end war', and the same will always be true. Violence is, therefore, unpractical.
>
> 3. Those who feel they must fight to defend liberty and democracy (even though they would fight for no lesser cause) are deluded. War, in modern conditions, even if it ends in victory, means the more certain destruction of such liberties as remain to us than even conquest by an invader might mean;

for no modern war can be waged successfully without the complete regimentation of entire peoples. It is better to die in conscientiously resisting oppression non-violently, than to live as a pawn in the regimented society which *must* emerge from another war, whoever may win it.

On the side of 'Nay' there are the following arguments :

1. Non-violent resistance can only be effective in resisting people who are capable of being moved by moral and humanitarian considerations. Fascism not only is not moved by such considerations, but openly scoffs at them as signs of weakness. It has no scruple in wiping out all resistance, and in employing any degree of brutality in order to do so. Non-violent resistance, therefore, stands no chance whatever against Fascism. Non-violent resistance is, therefore, hopelessly unpractical in present conditions.

2. To refuse cooperation in violent resistance (i.e. to be a C. O. in case of war or conscription) in defence of democratic liberty is tantamount to helping those who are destroying that liberty. Fascist aggression has undoubtedly been encouraged by the knowledge that the democracies contain numbers of people who are unwilling to fight in their defence, and who would even oppose (and thus obstruct) their own governments if war breaks out or some sort of conscription is enforced. This being so, the conscientious objector to violent means of defence becomes not merely ineffective in promoting peace, but actually helpful to those who are breaking it.

3. War may destroy liberty, but if the democracies survive, there is at least some possibility of regaining part of it ; whereas if the Fascists are allowed to rule the world, there is no chance at all. Conscientious objectors by weakening the democratic forces are helping the opposers, and thus defeating their own object.

The solution of this question is obviously terribly pressing for, say, a young man in any conscriptionist country today, or even in Great Britain, menaced as she is. But is it not really just as pressing for those in other countries, say South Africa, Egypt, or Australia which may have to face the possibility of invasion, or in an India which in the event of 'Complete Independence' might be faced with the possibility of invasion by Japan or by a pan-Islamic combination ?

In the face of such possibilities (say rather probabilities) ought not even every keen conscience (whether in a young body or in an old) to be certain exactly what is the right and practical way of action ? In some way on some (if not every) day this is the problem that every one of us has to face for himself. Can your readers help to clarify the issues ? Those who are not sure of the answer they must give when the time comes

will be made surer by thinking it out. Those who are sure of their own answer may help others to become equally sure."

Nothing need be said about the arguments in favour of the Peace Pledger's resistance. Those against resistance deserve careful examination. The first argument, if it is valid, cuts at the very root of the anti-war movement, which is based on the assumption that it is possible to convert Fascists and Nazis. They belong to the same species as the so-called democracies or, better still, war resisters themselves. They show in their family circles the same tenderness, affection, consideration and generosity that war resisters are likely to show even outside such circles. The difference is only of degree. Indeed Fascists and Nazis are a revised edition of so-called democracies, if they are not an answer to the latter's misdeeds. Kirby Page in his brochure on the toll of the late war has shown that both the combatants were guilty of falsehoods, exaggerations and inhumanities. The Versailles Treaty was a treaty of revenge against Germany by the victors. The so-called democracies have before now misappropriated other people's lands and have resorted to ruthless repression. What wonder if Messrs. Hitler & Co. have reduced to a science the unscientific violence their predecessors had developed for exploiting the so-called backward races for their own material gain? It is, therefore, a matter of rule of three to find out the exact amount of non-violence required to melt the harder hearts of the Fascists and the Nazis, if it is assumed, as it is, that the so-called democracies melt before a given amount of non-violence. Therefore, we must eliminate from consideration the first argument, which would be fatal if it could be proved to have any content in it.

The other two arguments are practical. The pacifists may not do anything to weaken their own governments so as to compel defeat. But for fear of so doing they may not miss the only effective chance they have of demonstrating their undying faith in the futility of all war. If their own governments go mad and make martyrs of war resisters, they (the governments) must suffer the consequence of the unrest of their own creation. The democracies must respect the liberty of individual non-violent conscience, however inconvenient it may be. From that respect there will spring hope for the world. This means that they put their conscience and truth before their country's so-called interest. For, regard for one's conscience, if it is really

such, has never yet injured any legitimate cause or interest. Therefore, it comes to this that a pacifist must resist when he feels strongly that, whether so-called democracies live or die, the tug-of-war will never end war, and that it will only end when at the crucial moment a body of pacifists have at any cost testified their living faith by suffering, if need be, the extreme penalty. I know the point for me to consider is not how to avoid the extreme penalty, but how to behave so as to achieve the object in view. Where the very disturbing but potent factor of faith is part of one's conduct, human calculations are of no avail. A true pacifist is a true *satyagrahi*. The latter acts by faith and therefore is not concerned about the result, for he knows that it is assured when the action is true.

After all, what is the gain if the so-called democracies win? War certainly will not end. Democracies will have adopted all the tactics of the Fascists and the Nazis, including conscription and all other forcible methods to compel and exact obedience. All that may be gained at the end of the victory is the possibility of comparative protection of individual liberty. But that protection does not depend upon outside help. It comes from the internal determination to protect it against the whole world. In other words, the true democrat is he who with purely non-violent means defends his liberty and therefore his country's and ultimately that of the whole of mankind. In the coming test pacifists have to prove their faith by resolutely refusing to do anything with war whether of defence or offence. But the duty of resistance accrues only to those who believe in non-violence as a creed — not to those who will calculate and will examine the merits of each case and decide whether to approve of or oppose a particular war. It follows that such resistance is a matter for each person to decide for himself and under the guidance of the inner voice, if he recognizes its existence.

Rajkot, 9-4-'39
Harijan, 15-4-1939

77

THE JEWISH QUESTION

The Managing Editor of *Jewish Frontier*, published at 275, Seventh Avenue, New York City, was good enough to send me a copy of the March number of the magazine with the request that I should deal with its reply to my article on the Jews in Germany and Palestine. The reply is very ably written. I wish I had space for reproducing the whole of it. The reader will, however, find the main argument reproduced* in this issue of *Harijan*.

Let me say that I did not write the article as a critic. I wrote it at the pressing request of Jewish friends and correspondents. As I decided to write, I could not do so in any other manner.

But I did not entertain the hope when I wrote it that the Jews would be at once converted to my view. I should have been satisfied if even one Jew had been fully convinced and converted.

Nor did I write the article only for today. I flatter myself with the belief that some of my writings will survive me, and will be of service to the causes for which they have been written. I have no sense of disappointment that my writing had not to my knowledge converted a single Jew.

Having read the reply more than once I must say that I see no reason to change the opinion I expressed in my article. It is highly probable that, as the writer says, 'a Jewish Gandhi in Germany, should one arise, could function for about five minutes and would be promptly taken to the guillotine.' But that will not disprove my case or shake my belief in the efficacy of *ahimsa*. I can conceive the necessity of the immolation of hundreds, if not thousands, to appease the hunger of dictators who have no belief in *ahimsa*. Indeed the maxim is that *ahimsa* is the most efficacious in front of the greatest *himsa*. Its quality is really tested only in such cases. Sufferers need not see the result during their lifetime. They must have faith that, if their

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* Appendix 5 in this book.

cult survives, the result is a certainty. The method of violence gives no greater guarantee than that of non-violence. It gives infinitely less. For the faith of the votary of *ahimsa* is lacking.

The writer contends that I approached the Jewish problem "without that fundamental earnestness and passionate search for truth which are so characteristic of his usual treatment of problems". All I can say is that to my knowledge there was lack neither of earnestness nor of passion for truth when I wrote the article. The second charge of the writer is more serious. He thinks that my zeal for Hindu-Muslim unity made me partial to the Arab presentation of the case, especially as that side was naturally emphasized in India. I have often said that I would not sell truth for the sake of India's deliverance. Much less would I do so for winning Muslim friendship. The writer thinks that I am wrong on the Jewish question as I was wrong on the Khilafat question. Even at this distance of time I have no regret whatsoever for having taken up the Khilafat cause. I know that my persistence does not prove the correctness of my attitude. Only it is necessary for everyone concerned to know where I stand today about my action in 1919-'20.

I am painfully conscious of the fact that this writing of mine will give no satisfaction either to the Editor of *Jewish Frontier* or to my many Jewish friends. Nevertheless I wish with all my heart that somehow or other the persecution of the Jews in Germany will end, and that the question in Palestine will be settled to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned.

Rajkot, 22-5-'39
Harijan, 27-5-1939

78

WITHDRAWN

In *Harijan* of December 24th there is a long report of my talk with missionary friends from Tambaram on non-violence and the world crisis.* When during the talk I took the illustration of the Jews, I am reported to have said: "It is true that the Jews have not been actively violent in their own persons. But they called down upon the Germans the curses of mankind and they wanted America and England to fight Germany on their behalf."

On reading the last sentence a dear friend wrote to me a fiery letter and challenged me to produce my authority for my remark. He said that I had been hasty in making the statement. I did not realize the importance of the rebuke. I did, however, want to produce support for my statement. I put Pyarelal and later Mahadev on the search. It is not always an easy task to find support for impressions one carries when speaking or writing. Meanwhile I received a letter from Lord Samuel supporting the contradiction of the friend referred to above. Whilst I was having the search made, I got the following letter from Sir Philip Hartog:

> "May I take the opportunity of saying that I agree with what my friends Mr. Polak and Lord Samuel tell me they have written to you about the attitude of the German Jewish refugees, of whom I have myself seen hundreds since 1933? I have never heard one of them express publicly or privately the desire for a war of vengeance against Germany. Indeed such a war would bring further misery to the hundreds of thousands of Jews still in Germany as well as untold suffering to millions of other innocent men and women."

I put greater diligence in my search. The searchers were not able to lay hands on any conclusive writing. The manager of *Harijan* put himself in correspondence with the Editor of *The Jewish Tribune*, Bombay, who sent the following characteristic reply:

> "This is not the first time that I have come across the imputation made against Jews that they urge countries like

* See chapter 68 (p. 169) in this book.

England and America to go to war against Germany on account of its persecutions of Jews. Jews have never urged the democracies to wage war against Germany on account of its persecution of the Jews. This is a mischievous lie that must be nailed to the counter. If there is a war, Jews will suffer more than the rest of the population. This is a fact gleaned from the pages of history. And the Jew is a great lover and advocate of peace. I hope you will refute any such allegation that is made against them."

In the face of the foregoing weighty contradictions now enforced by the Editor of *The Jewish Tribune*, and of the fact that I cannot lay my hands on anything on the strength of which I made the challenged observation, I must withdraw it without any reservation. I only hope that my observation has not harmed any single Jew. I know that I incurred the wrath of many German friends for what I said in all good faith.

Rajkot, 22-5-39
Harijan, 27-5-1939

79

THE OXFORD GROUP & MORAL REARMAMENT

The Oxford Group Movement

During recent years plenty of literature has been sent to us pertaining to the Oxford Group Movement and its work, and we have met not a few members of the Group. I had the advantage of being invited to a number of what they call their "house-parties" in England, and had the privilege of meeting a good few members in Abbottabad.

We have found them refreshingly frank, and the friend who met Gandhiji in Abbottabad made a few confessions that did credit to him. On some of the basic principles we found ourselves in complete agreement.

Moral Rearmament

The difficulty would seem to be greater when we think of the programme of moral rearmament with which the Oxford Movement has identified itself. Dr. Frank Buchman, the

founder of the movement, initiated this Moral Rearmament movement, and President Roosevelt advocated, before four thousand persons assembled in Constitution Hall in America, moral rearmament as a means of maintaining world peace. "A programme of moral rearmament for the world cannot fail to lessen the dangers of armed conflict. Such moral rearmament must receive support on a world-wide basis," said he. And we are told twentythree members of the House of Lords supported the appeal declaring that "men and nations must be spiritually equipped with faith and love".

Now what is one to make of this movement? Gandhiji was invited to put his signature to a "response" to President Roosevelt's message. Two of the paragraphs in it read thus:

> "MRA means first of all a change of heart. It means admission of our responsibility for the past, a frank acceptance by nations as by individuals of the standards of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, and daily listening and daily obedience to God's direction.
>
> At this fateful hour we pledge ourselves to give the last full measure of our devotion — the service of heart, mind, will — to the Moral and Spiritual Rearmament of our nation — to building the world of tomorrow, the world of new men, new nations, where every resource of human genius is liberated under God's leadership to enrich the heritage of all mankind."

With all deference to those in India who had signed this "response" Gandhiji said he could not in all conscience sign this. He could not endorse a falsehood. How can India accept responsibility for the past? "All this," said Gandhiji, "has no application to me. The whole paragraph applies to exploiting nations, whereas India is an exploited nation. The second paragraph too applies to nations of the West and not to us. The whole appeal is so unreal. I can think of moral rearmament, but that would be in a different setting. I can think of communal unity through moral rearmament. As a member of an exploited nation I can have a different moral rearmament programme and I may invite China to it, but how can I invite the West or Japan? And just as it would be unreal for me to invite the West, it would to that extent be unreal for the West to invite India. Let them shed their exploitation policy and their immoral gains first."

Gandhiji has been invited to a Moral Rearmament camp in Kashmir, and the invitation is signed by an I. C. S., a brigadier, and a judge. I wonder if they have thought of the aspect presented here by Gandhiji. How can anyone work for peace who has not dissociated himself from the Empire and all it means? As Mr. Charles Roden Buxton has said: "The British Empire, in its present exclusive form, with its imperial preference system — and with all the envies, suspicions, and criticisms which it causes throughout the world — is one of the greatest obstacles to world peace".

Sevagram, 7-8-'39 M. D.
Harijan, 12-8-1939

80

THE WAR RESOLUTION

On the war resolution I had a conclusive defeat. I was invited to draft a resolution, and so was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I was proud of my draft, but my pride went before destruction. I saw that I could not carry my resolution unless I argued and pressed for it. But I had no such desire. We then listened to Jawaharlal's. And I at once admitted that it represented more truly than mine the country's opinion and even the Working Committee's as a whole. Mine was based upon out-and-out non-violence. If the Congress heartily believed in non-violence in its fullness even as a policy, this was its testing time. But Congressmen, barring individual exceptions, do not believe in such non-violence. Those who do, believe that it is the right thing only for a fight against the Government for wresting power, but the Congress has no non-violent message for the world. I would fain believe that the Congress had such a message. The conclusion to both the resolutions need not have been radically different. But the motive power being different, the same conclusion would bear a different meaning in a different setting. In the face of the violence going on in India itself and in the face of the fact that Congress Governments have been obliged to fall back upon military and police assistance, a

declaration to the world of non-violence would have seemed a mockery. It would have carried no weight in India or with the world. Yet, to be true to myself, I could not draft any resolution other than I did.

The fate, to which I was party, of my resolution proved the wisdom of my withdrawal of official connection with the Congress. I attend the Working Committee meetings not to identify myself with its resolutions or even its general policy. I attend in the pursuit of my mission of non-violence. So long as they want my attendance I go there to emphasize non-violence in their acts and through them in those of Congressmen. We pursue the same goal. They all of them would go the whole length with me if they could, but they want to be true to themselves and to the country which they represent for the time being, even as I want to be true to myself. I know that the progress of non-violence is seemingly a terribly slow progress. But experience has taught me that it is the surest way to the common goal. There is deliverance neither for India nor for the world through clash of arms. Violence, even for vindication of justice, is almost played out. With that belief I am content to plough a lonely furrow, if it is to be my lot that I have no co-sharer in the out-and-out belief in non-violence.

Sevagram, 23-8-'39
Harijan, 26-8-1939

81

THE IMPENDING CRISIS

A sister from London wired on the 24th inst.: "Please act. World awaiting lead." Another wire from another sister in London received today says: "Urge you consider immediate expression of your unshakable faith in reason not force to rulers and all peoples." I have been hesitating to say anything on the impending world crisis which affects the welfare not of a few nations but of the whole of mankind. I have felt that my word can have no effect on those on whom depends the decision whether there is to be war or peace. I know that many in the West believe that my word does carry weight. I wish I shared their belief. Not having such belief I have been praying in secret that God may spare us the calamity of war. But I have no hesitation in redeclaring my faith in reason, which is another word for non-violence, rather than the arbitrament of war for the settlement of disputes or redress of wrongs. I cannot emphasize my belief more forcibly than by saying that I personally would not purchase my own country's freedom by violence even if such a thing were a possibility. My faith in the wise saying that what is gained by the sword will also be lost by the sword is imperishable. How I wish Herr Hitler would respond to the appeal of the President of the United States and allow his claim to be investigated by arbitrators in whose choice he will have as effective a voice as the disputants!

Sevagram, 28-8-'39
Harijan, 2-9-1939

THE SIMLA VISIT

At Delhi, as I was entraining for Kalka, a big crowd sang in perfect good humour, to the worn-out refrain of "Mahatma Gandhi ki jai", "We do not want any understanding". I had then my weekly silence. Therefore I merely smiled. And those who were standing on the footboard returned the smile with their smile, whilst they were admonishing me not to have any understanding with the Viceroy. I had also a letter from a Congress committee giving me similar warning. Neither of these counsellors knew me. I did not need the warning to know my limitations. Apart from the Delhi demonstration and a Congress committee's warning, it is my duty to tell the public what happened at the interview with H. E. the Viceroy.

I knew that I had no authority to speak for any person except myself. I had no instructions whatsoever from the Working Committee in the matter. I had answered a telegraphic invitation and taken the first train I could catch. And what is more, with my irrepressible and out-and-out non-violence, I knew that I could not represent the national mind and I should cut a sorry figure if I tried to do so. I told His Excellency as much. Therefore there could be no question of any understanding or negotiation with me. Nor, I saw, had he sent for me to negotiate. I have returned from the Viceregal Lodge empty-handed and without any understanding, open or secret. If there is to be any, it would be between the Congress and the Government.

Having, therefore, made my position *vis-a-vis* the Congress quite clear, I told His Excellency that my own sympathies were with England and France from the purely humanitarian standpoint. I told him that I could not contemplate without being stirred to the very depth the destruction of London which had hitherto been regarded as impregnable. And as I was picturing before him the Houses of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction, I broke down. I have become disconsolate. In the secret of my heart I am in perpetual quarrel with God that He should allow such things to go on.

My non-violence seems almost impotent. But the answer comes at the end of the daily quarrel that neither God nor non-violence is impotent. Impotence is in men. I must try on without losing faith even though I may break in the attempt.

And so, as though in anticipation of the agony that was awaiting me, I sent on the 23rd July from Abbottabad the following letter to Herr Hitler:

> "Friends have been urging me to write to you for the sake of humanity. But I have resisted their request because of the feeling that any letter from me would be an impertinence. Something tells me that I must not calculate, and that I must make my appeal for whatever it may be worth.
>
> It is quite clear that you are today the one person in the world who can prevent a war which may reduce humanity to the savage state. Must you pay that price for an object, however worthy it may appear to you to be? Will you listen to the appeal of one who has deliberately shunned the method of war not without considerable success?
>
> Any way I anticipate your forgiveness, if I have erred in writing to you."

How I wish that even now he would listen to reason and the appeal from almost the whole of thinking mankind, not excluding the German people themselves! I must refuse to believe that the Germans contemplate with equanimity the evacuation of big cities like London for fear of destruction to be wrought by man's inhuman ingenuity. They cannot contemplate with equanimity such destruction of themselves and their own monuments. I am not, therefore, just now thinking of India's deliverance. It will come, but what will it be worth if England and France fall, or if they come out victorious over Germany ruined and humbled?

Yet it almost seems as if Herr Hitler knows no God but brute force and, as Mr. Chamberlain says, he will listen to nothing else. It is in the midst of this catastrophe without parallel that Congressmen and all other responsible Indians individually and collectively have to decide what part India is to play in this terrible drama.

Simla, 5-9-'39
Harijan, 9-9-1939

SOURCE OF MY SYMPATHY

The statement made by me just after my interview with H. E. the Viceroy has had a mixed reception. It has been described as sentimental twaddle by one critic and as a statesman-like pronouncement by another. There are variations between the two extremes. I suppose all the critics are right from their own standpoint, and all are wrong from the absolute standpoint which, in this instance, is that of the author. He wrote for nobody's satisfaction but his own. I abide by every word I have said in it. It has no political value except what every humanitarian opinion may possess. Interrelation of ideas cannot be prevented.

I have a spirited protest from a correspondent. It calls for a reply. I do not reproduce the letter, as parts of it I do not understand myself. But there is no difficulty in catching its drift. The main argument is this:

> "If you shed tears over the possible destruction of the English Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey, have you no tears for the possible destruction of the monuments of Germany? And why do you sympathize with England and France and not with Germany? Is not Hitler an answer to the ravishing of Germany by the Allied Powers during the last war? If you were a German, had the resourcefulness of Hitler, and were a believer in the doctrine of retaliation as the whole world is, you would have done what Hitler is doing. Nazism may be bad. We do not know what it really is. The literature we get is one-sided. But I suggest to you that there is no difference between Chamberlain and Hitler. In Hitler's place Chamberlain would not have acted otherwise. You have done an injustice to Hitler by comparing him with Chamberlain, to the former's disadvantage. Is England's record in India any better than Hitler's in another part of the world in similar circumstances? Hitler is but an infant pupil of the old imperialist England and France. I fancy that your emotion at the Viceregal Lodge had the better of your judgment."

No one perhaps has described English misdeeds more forcibly, subject to truth, than I have. No one has resisted England more effectively, perhaps, than I have. And my desire for and power of resistance remained unabated. But there are

seasons for speech and action, as there are seasons for silence and inaction.

In the dictionary of *satyagraha* there is no enemy. But as I have no desire to prepare a new dictionary for *satyagrahis*, I use the old words giving them a new meaning. A *satyagrahi* loves his so-called enemy even as his friend. He owns no enemy. As a *satyagrahi*, i.e. votary of *ahimsa*, I must wish well to England. My wishes regarding Germany were, and they still are, irrelevant for the moment. But I have said in a few words in my statement that I would not care to erect the freedom of my country on the remains of despoiled Germany. I should be as much moved by a contemplation of the possible destruction of Germany's monuments. Herr Hitler stands in no need of my sympathy. In assessing the present merits, the past misdeeds of England and the good deeds of Germany are irrelevant. Rightly or wrongly, and irrespective of what the other powers have done before under similar circumstances, I have come to the conclusion that Herr Hitler is responsible for the war. I do not judge his claim. It is highly probable that his right to incorporate Danzig in Germany is beyond question, if the Danzig Germans desire to give up their independent status. It may be that his claim to appropriate the Polish Corridor is a just claim. My complaint is that he will not let the claim be examined by an independent tribunal. It is no answer to the rejection of the appeal for submission to arbitration that it came from interested quarters. Even a thief may conceivably make a correct appeal to his fellow-thief. I think I am right in saying that the whole world was anxious that Herr Hitler should allow his demand to be examined by an impartial tribunal. If he succeeds in his design, his success will be no proof of the justness of his claim. It will be proof that the law of the jungle is still a great force in human affairs. It will be one more proof that though we humans have changed the form we have not changed the manners of the beast.

I hope it is now clear to my critics that my sympathy for England and France is not a result of momentary emotion or, in cruder language, of hysteria. It is derived from the never-drying fountain of non-violence which my breast has nursed for fifty years. I claim no infallibility for my judgment. All I claim is that my sympathy for England and France is reasoned.

I invite those who accept the premises on which my sympathy is based to join me. What shape it should take is another matter. Alone I can but pray. And so I told His Excellency that my sympathy had no concrete value in the face of the concrete destruction that is facing those who are directly engaged in the war.

Sevagram, 11-9-'39
Harijan, 16-9-1939

84

TO THE BRAVE POLES

Gandhiji received the following cable from Morges (Switzerland) from Paderewski, the aged ex-President of the Polish Republic and celebrated pianist :

"On behalf of a nation who is today defending the sacred right to remain free against a cruel and nameless tyranny, I appeal to you as one of the greatest moral authorities of the world to use your noble influence with your countrymen to gain for Poland their sympathy and friendship. Throughout the thousand years of its history the Polish nation has always stood for the highest ideals of humanity, for faith, for justice, and peace. In this terrible hour when innumerable innocent women and children are massacred daily, a word of sympathy and encouragement from you, great teacher of your own nation, would profoundly move the heart of every Pole."

To this Gandhiji replied :

"Of course my whole heart is with the Poles in the unequal struggle in which they are engaged for the sake of saving their freedom. But I am painfully conscious of the fact that my word carries no power with it. I wish I had the power to stop this mad destruction that is going on in Europe. I belong to a country that has lost its independence and is struggling to be free from the yoke of the greatest imperialist power on earth. It has adopted the unique method of non-violence to regain its lost freedom. Though the method has proved its efficacy to an extent, the goal seems far off. All that I can, therefore, send to the brave Poles is my heart-felt prayer for the early termina-

tion of their fearful trial and for the grant of the required strength to bear the suffering whose very contemplation makes one shudder. Their cause is just and their victory certain. For God is always the upholder of justice."

Sevagram, 8-9-'39

Harijan, 16-9-1939

85

WORKING COMMITTEE'S MANIFESTO

1. The Working Committee have given their earnest consideration to the grave crisis that has developed owing to the declaration of war in Europe. The principles which should guide the nation in the event of war have been repeatedly laid down by the Congress, and only a month ago this Committee reiterated them and expressed their displeasure at the flouting of Indian opinion by the British Government in India. As a first step to dissociate themselves from this policy of the British Government, the Committee called upon the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attending the next session. Since then the British Government have declared India as a belligerent country, promulgated ordinances, passed the Government of India Act Amending Bill, and taken other far-reaching measures which affect the Indian people vitally, and circumscribe and limit the powers and the activities of the Provincial Governments. This has been done without the consent of the Indian people whose declared wishes in such matters have been deliberately ignored by the British Government. The Working Committee must take the gravest view of these developments.

2. The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away well established principles and recognized standards of civilized behaviour. It has been in Fascism and Nazism the intensification of the principle of imperialism against which the Indian people have

struggled for many years. The Working Committee must therefore unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathize with those who resist it.

3. The Congress has further laid down that the issue of war and peace for India must be decided by the Indian people, and no outside authority can impose this decision upon them, nor can the Indian people permit their resources to be exploited for imperialist ends. Any imposed decision, or attempt to use Indian resources for purposes not approved by them, will necessarily have to be opposed by them. If co-operation is desired in a worthy cause, this cannot be obtained by compulsion and imposition, and the Committee cannot agree to the carrying out by the Indian people of orders issued by external authority. Co-operation must be between equals by mutual consent for a cause which both consider to be worthy. The people of India have, in the recent past, faced great risks and willingly made great sacrifices to secure their own freedom and establish a free democratic State in India, and their sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom. But India cannot associate herself in a war said to be for democratic freedom when that very freedom is denied to her, and such limited freedom as she possesses taken away from her.

4. The Committee are aware that the governments of Great Britain and France have declared that they are fighting for democracy and freedom and to put an end to aggression. But the history of the recent past is full of examples showing the constant divergence between the spoken word, the ideals proclaimed, and the real motives and objectives. During the War of 1914-18 the declared war aims were the preservation of democracy, self-determination, and the freedom of small nations, and yet the very governments which solemnly proclaimed these aims entered into secret treaties embodying imperialist designs for the carving up of the Ottoman Empire. While stating that they did not want any acquisition of territory, the victorious Powers added largely to their colonial domains. The present European war itself signifies the abject failure of the Treaty of Versailles and of its makers, who broke their pledged word and imposed an imperialist peace on the defeated nations. The one hopeful outcome of that treaty, the League of Nations, was muzzled and

strangled at the outset and later killed by its parent States.

5. Subsequent history has demonstrated afresh how even a seemingly fervent declaration of faith may be followed by an ignoble desertion. In Manchuria the British Government connived at aggression; in Abyssinia they acquiesced in it. In Czecho-Slovakia and Spain democracy was in peril and it was deliberately betrayed, and the whole system of collective security was sabotaged by the very Powers who had previously declared their firm faith in it.

6. Again it is asserted that democracy is in danger and must be defended, and with this statement the Committee are in entire agreement. The Committee believe that the peoples of the West are moved by this ideal and objective and for these they are prepared to make sacrifices. But again and again the ideals and sentiments of the people and of those who have sacrificed themselves in the struggle have been ignored and faith has not been kept with them.

7. If the war is to defend the *status quo*, imperialist possessions, colonies, vested interests and privileges, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and a world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it. The Committee are convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or of world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India or elsewhere and imperialism and Fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions, establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination by framing their own constitution through a Constituent Assembly without external interference, and must guide their own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilizing the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity.

8. The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity and will not pass like other crisis or wars

leaving the essential structure of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or ill, politically, socially and economically. This crisis is the inevitable consequence of the social and political conflicts and contradictions which have grown alarmingly since the last Great War, and it will not be finally resolved till these conflicts and contradictions are removed and a new equilibrium established. That equilibrium can only be based on the ending of the domination and exploitation of one country by another, and on a reorganization of economic relations on a juster basis for the common good of all. India is the crux of the problem, for India has been the outstanding example of modern imperialism, and no refashioning of the world can succeed which ignores this vital problem. With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganization. But she can only do so as a free nation whose energies have been released to work for this great end. Freedom today is indivisible and every attempt to retain imperialist domination in any part of the world will lead inevitably to fresh disaster.

9. The Working Committee have noted that many rulers of Indian States have offered their services and resources and expressed their desire to support the cause of democracy in Europe. If they must make their professions in favour of democracy abroad, the Committee would suggest that their first concern should be the introduction of democracy within their own States in which today undiluted autocracy reigns supreme. The British Government in India is more responsible for this autocracy than even the rulers themselves, as has been made painfully evident during the past year. This policy is the very negation of democracy and of the new world order for which Great Britain claims to be fighting in Europe.

10. As the Working Committee view past events in Europe, Africa and Asia, and more particularly past and present occurrences in India, they fail to find any attempt to advance the cause of democracy or self-determination, or any evidence that the present war declarations of the British Government are being, or are going to be, acted upon. The true measure of democracy is the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike and the aggression that has accompanied them in the past and the present. Only on that basis can a new order be built up. In

the struggle for that new world order, the Committee are eager and desirous to help in every way. But the Committee cannot associate themselves or offer any co-operation in a war which is conducted on imperialist lines and which is meant to consolidate imperilism in India and elsewhere.

11. In view, however, of the gravity of the occasion and the fact that the pace of events during the last few days has often been swifter than the working of men's minds, the Committee desire to take no final decision at this stage, so as to allow for the full elucidation of the issues at stake, the real objectives aimed at, and the position of India in the present and in the future. But the decision cannot long be delayed, as India is being committed from day to day to a policy to which she is not a party and of which she disapproves.

12. The Working Committee therefore invite the British Government to declare in unequivocal terms what their war aims are in regard to democracy and imperialism and the new order that is envisaged, in particular, how these aims are going to apply to India and to be given effect to in the present. Do they include the elimination of imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people? A clear declaration about the future, pledging the Government to the ending of Imperialism and Fascism alike, will be welcomed by the people of all countries, but it is far more important to give immediate effect to it, to the largest possible extent, for only this will convince the people that the declaration is meant to be honoured. The real test of any declaration is its application in the present, for it is the present that will govern action today and give shape to the future.

13. War has broken out in Europe and the prospect is terrible to contemplate. But war has been taking its heavy toll of human life during the past year in Abyssinia, Spain and China. Innumerable innocent men, women and children have been bombed to death from the air in open cities; cold-blooded massacres, torture and utmost humiliation have followed each other in quick succession during these years of horror. That horror grows, and violence and the threat of violence shadow the world, and, unless checked and ended, will destroy the precious inheritance of past ages. That horror has to be checked in Europe

and China, but it will not end till its root causes of Fascism and Imperialism are removed. To that end, the Working Committee are prepared to give their co-operation. But it will be infinite tragedy if even this terrible war is carried on in the spirit of imperialism and for the purpose of retaining this structure which is itself the cause of war and human degradation.

14. The Working Committee wish to declare that the Indian people have no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people. But they have a deep-rooted quarrel with systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression. They do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace, but to a victory of real democracy for all the people of all countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist oppression.

15. The Committee earnestly appeal to the Indian people to end all internal conflict and controversy and, in this grave hour of peril, to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation, calm of purpose and determined to achieve the freedom of India with the larger freedom of the world.

Wardha, 14-9-1939

Gandhiji's Comment on the Manifesto

The Working Committee's statement on the world crisis took four days before it received final shape. Every member expressed his opinion freely on the draft that was, at the Committee's invitation, prepared by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I was sorry to find myself alone in thinking that whatever support was to be given to the British should be given unconditionally. This could only be done on a purely non-violent basis. But the Committee had a tremendous responsibility to discharge. It could not take the purely non-violent attitude. It felt that the nation had not imbibed the non-violent spirit requisite for the possession of the strength which disdains to take advantage of the difficulty of the opponent. But in stating the reasons for its conclusion the Committee desired to show the greatest consideration for the English.

The author of the statement is an artist. Though he cannot be surpassed in his implacable oppositon to imperialism in any shape or form, he is a friend of the English people. Indeed he is more English than Indian in his thoughts and make-up. He

is often more at home with Englishmen than with his own countrymen. And he is a humanitarian in the sense that he reacts to every wrong, no matter where perpetrated. Though, therefore, he is an ardent nationalist, his nationalism is enriched by his fine internationalism. Hence the statement is a manifesto addressed not only to his own countrymen, not only to the British government and the British people, but it is addressed also to the nations of the world including those that are exploited like India. He has compelled India, through the Working Committee, to think not merely of her own freedom, but of the freedom of all the exploited nations of the world.

The same time that the Committee passed the statement it appointed a Board of his choice with himself as Chairman to deal with the situation as it may develop from time to time.

I hope that the statement will receive the unanimous support of all the parties among Congress. The strongest among them will not find any lack of strength in it. And at this supreme hour in the history of the nation the Congress should believe that there will be no lack of strength in action, if action becomes necessary. It will be a pity, if Congressmen engage in petty squabbles and party strife. If anything big or worthy is to come out of the Committee's action, the undivided and unquestioned loyalty of every Congressman is absolutely necessary. I hope too that all other political parties and all communities will join the Committee's demand for a clear declaration of their policy from the British Government with such corresponding action as is possible amidst martial conditions. Recognition of India, and for that matter of all those who are under the British Crown, as free and independent nations seems to me to be the natural corollary of British professions about democracy. If the war means anything less, the co-operation of dependent nations can never be honestly voluntary, unless it were based on non-violence.

All that is required is a mental revolution on the part of British statesmen. To put it still more plainly, all that is required is honest action to implement the declaration of faith in democracy made on the eve of the war, and still being repeated from British platforms. Will Great Britain have an unwilling India dragged into the war or a willing ally co-operating with her in the prosecution of a defence of true democracy? The

Congress support will mean the greatest moral asset in favour of England and France. The Congress fights not with violent but with non-violent means, however imperfect, however crude the non-violence may be.

Sevagram, 15-9-39
Harijan, 23-9-1939

86

A POLISH SISTER'S AGONY

"In spite of all I am going to try to reach Poland — sailing tonight — to Basra in Iraq, then through Turkey and Rumania. The inner call is irresistible. It may seem madness from the ordinary human point of view. Now I am not going for my mother's sake or for my dearest friends who are now on the battle-fields — ready to die at any moment — it is for Poland itself. I believe countries have also souls. Souls of nations are a reality, not a theory, for me. If I reach the soil of Poland, I will feel satisfied, even if I do not find those whom I love. It is the soul (and body) of the nation itself that is in its supreme hour of martyrdom. I believe Poland bleeds and struggles not only for her own rights but for the Right, the Just, the True, for the freedom of all nations, India including. I feel Hindu to the bottom of my heart; Indian as much as Pole, both motherlands are to be in my soul to the last day of my life. But I could not live if I would not do what is humanly possible to reach the feet of the Mother who is now bleeding in agony of pain. I shall write from the way, but not when I reach the war zone; I shall only think often about you and send mental messages as well as I can. Bapuji, do pray in all fervour of your great loving heart for those thousands of innocent people who suffer incredible pain and misery in Poland. It is these that need most sympathy and blessings and tender thoughts."

This is the letter a Polish sister wrote from Bombay harbour. I have known her for some years. She has become as much Indian as she is Polish. She had decided to work at Maganwadi in the Magan Museum. But the rumours of war upset her. She has an aged mother in Poland whom she could not bring out owing to passport difficulties. When the war actually broke out, she calmed down so far as her mother was concerned. But her highly strung nature would not let her rest

whilst her nearest and dearest were in peril of their lives for no offence of theirs. She is herself a believer through and through in non-violence. But her very non-violence made her restless. Her whole soul has rebelled against the wrong, as she thinks, that is being perpetrated against her motherland. So she has gone to find the Poland of her imagination fighting to the last ditch, not for merely preserving her own freedom but for the freedom of all those nations who have lost it. And in this she naturally includes her second love, India. May her dream prove true. If Poland has that measure of uttermost bravery and an equal measure of selflessness, history will forget that she defended herself with violence. Her violence will be counted almost as non-violence.

Sevagram, 18-9-39
Harijan, 23-9-1939

87

IS INDIA A MILITARY COUNTRY ?

In the interesting broadcast delivered by the Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces in India on the 5th inst. there occurs this passage :

> "India is a military country and I am a soldier. It will, therefore, perhaps not be amiss, if I give you some personal impressions of what the effect of modernization will be on the personnel of the future Army in India. They are not just guess-work but based on what has already been done. With new scientific weapons and with modern vehicles, there will inevitably come new ideas and a new outlook. Modernization is likely to give increased impetus to the already high rate of education in the Indian Army ; and when nearly every soldier on discharge returns to his home with a knowledge of motor cars and machinery, there may well be a perceptible effect upon the age-old methods of agriculture and ways of living. Modernization in the Army may therefore have a considerable indirect effect upon the life of India. Many of those who hear me will regret the passing of the horse. No one regrets it more than myself. But as a soldier who knows the fate which awaits the horse in modern warfare, I rejoice for its sake, that one of the

greatest and best of friends of man is in future to be spared the horrors of war."

I must wholly, though respectfully, dissent from the view that India is a military country. And I thank God that it is not. It may be that the Commander-in-Chief has a special meaning for the term which I do not know. Or is it that his India is composed of only the Defence Forces under his command? For me the Defence Forces are of the least importance in the make-up of the nation. I need not be reminded that life would be in constant peril if the forces were withdrawn. The forces notwithstanding, life is not free from peril. There are riots, there are murders, there are dacoities, there are raids. The Defence Forces avail little in all these perils. They generally act after the mischief is done. But the gallant Commander-in-Chief looks at things as a soldier. I and, with me, the millions are untouched by the military spirit. From ages past India has had a military caste in numbers wholly insignificant. That caste has had little to do with the millions. This, however, is not the occasion for examining its contribution to the making of India. All I want to state, with the utmost emphasis at my command, is that the description of India as a military country is wrong. Of all the countries in the world India is the least military. Though I have failed with the Working Committee in persuading them, at this supreme moment, to declare their undying faith in non-violence as the only sovereign remedy for saving mankind from destruction, I have not lost the hope that the masses will refuse to bow to the Moloch of war but will rely upon their capacity for suffering to save the country's honour. How has the undoubted military valour of Poland served her against the superior forces of Germany and Russia? Would Poland unarmed have fared worse if it had met the challenge of these combined forces with the resolution to face death without retaliation? Would the invading forces have taken a heavier toll from an infinitely more valorous Poland? It is highly probable that their essential nature would have made them desist from a wholesale slaughter of innocents.

Of all the organisations of the world the Congress is the best fitted to show it the better way, indeed the only way, to the true life. Its non-violent experiment will have been in vain if, when India wakes up from the present fear, she does not show

to the world the way of deliverance from the blood bath. The criminal waste of life and wealth that is now going on will not be the last, if India does not play her natural part by showing that human dignity is best preserved not by developing the capacity to deal destruction but by refusing to retaliate. I have no manner of doubt that, if it is possible to train millions in the black art of violence which is the law of the beast, it is more possible to train them in the white art of non-violence which is the law of regenerate man. Anyway, if the Commander-in-Chief will look beyond the Defence Forces, he will discover that the real India is not military but peace-loving.

Nor do I contemplate without uneasiness the prospect of Indian soldiers, trained after the modern manner, taking the motor spirit to their homes. Speed is not the end of life. Man sees more and lives more truly by walking to his duty.

On the train to Simla, 25-9-39
Harijan, 30-9-1939

88

CONUNDRUMS

Thus asks a well-known Congressman:

"1. What is your personal attitude towards this war consistent with non-violence?

2. Is it the same as, or different from, your attitude during the last war?

3. How could you with your non-violence actively associate with and help the Congress whose policy is based on violence in the present crisis?

4. What is your concrete plan based on non-violence to oppose or prevent this war?"

These questions conclude a long friendly complaint about my seeming inconsistencies or my inscrutability. Both are old complaints, perfectly justified from the standpoint of the complainants, wholly unjustified from my own. Therefore my complainants and I must agree to differ. Only this let me say. At the time of writing I never think of what I have said before. My aim is not to be consistent with my previous statements on a given question, but to be consistent with truth as it may

present itself to me at a given moment. The result has been that I have grown from truth to truth; I have saved my memory an undue strain; and what is more, whenever I have been obliged to compare my writing even of fifty years ago with the latest, I have discovered no inconsistency between the two. But friends who observe inconsistency will do well to take the meaning that my latest writing may yield unless, of course, they prefer the old. But before making the choice they should try to see if there is not an underlying and abiding consistency between the two seeming inconsistencies.

So far as my inscrutability is concerned, friends should take my assurance that there is never any attempt on my part to suppress my thought when it is relevant. Sometimes it arises from my desire to be brief. And sometimes it must be due to my own ignorance of the subject on which I may be called upon to give an opinion.

To give a typical instance, a friend, between whom and me there never is any mental reservation, thus writes in anguish rather than anger:

> "In the not-improbable event of India being a theatre of war, is Gandhiji prepared to advise his countrymen to bare their breasts to the enemy's sword? A little while ago I would have pledged my word he would do so, but I am not confident any more."

I can only assure him that, notwithstanding my recent writings, he can retain his confidence that I would give the same advice as he expects I would have given before, or as I gave to the Czechs or the Abyssinians. My non-violence is made of stern stuff. It is firmer than the firmest metal known to the scientists. Yet, alas, I am painfully conscious of the fact that it has still not attained its native firmness. If it had, God would have shown me the way to deal with the many local cases of violence that I helplessly witness daily. This is said not in arrogance but in the certain knowledge of the power of perfect non-violence. I will not have the power of non-violence to be underestimated in order to cover my limitations or weaknesses.

Now for a few lines in answer to the foregoing questions.

1. My personal reaction towards this war is one of greater horror than ever before. I was not so disconsolate before as I am today. But the greater horror would prevent me today

from becoming the self-appointed recruiting sergeant that I had become during the last war. And yet, strange as it may appear, my sympathies are wholly with the Allies. Willy nilly this war is resolving itself into one between such democracy as the West has evolved and totalitarianism as it is typified in Herr Hitler. Though the part that Russia is playing is painful, let us hope that the unnatural combination will result in a happy though unintended fusion whose shape no one can foretell. Unless the Allies suffer demoralization, of which there is not the slightest indication, this war may be used to end all wars, at any rate of the virulent type that we see today. I have the hope that India, distraught though it is with internal dissensions, will play an effective part in ensuring the desired end and the spread of cleaner democracy than hitherto. This will undoubtedly depend upon how the Working Committee will ultimately act in the real tragedy that is being played on the world stage. We are both actors in and spectators of the drama. My line is cast. Whether I act as a humble guide of the Working Committee or, if I may use the same expression without offence, of the Government, my guidance will be for the deliberate purpose of taking either or both along the path of non-violence, be the step ever so imperceptible. It is plain that I cannot force the pace either way. I can only use such power as God may endow my head or heart with for the moment.

2. I think I have covered the second question in answering the first.

3. There are degrees of violence as of non-violence. The Working Committee has not wilfully departed from the policy of non-violence. It could not honestly accept the real implications of non-violence. It felt that the vast mass of congressmen had never clearly understood that in the event of danger from without they were to defend the country by non-violent means. All that they had learnt truly was that they could put up a successful fight, on the whole non-violent, against the British Government. Congressmen have had no training in the use of non-violence in other fields. Thus, for example, they had not yet discovered a sure method of dealing successfully in a non-violent manner with communal riots or *goondaism*. The argument is final inasmuch as it is based on actual experience. I would not serve the cause of non-violence, if I deserted my best

co-workers because they could not follow me in an extended application of non-violence. I therefore remain with them in the faith that their departure from the non-violent method will be confined to the narrowest field and will be temporary.

4. I have no ready-made concrete plan. For me too this is a new field. Only I have no choice as to the means. It must always be purely non-violent, whether I am closeted with the members of the Working Committee or with the Viceroy. Therefore what I am doing is itself a part of the concrete plan. More will be revealed to me from day to day, as all my plans always have been. The famous non-co-operation resolution came to me within less than 24 hours of the meeting of the A.I.C.C. at which it was moved in Calcutta in 1920; and so did practically the Dandi March. The foundation of the first civil resistance under the then known name of passive resistance was laid by accident at a meeting of Indians in Johannesburg in 1906 convened for the purpose of finding the means of combating the anti-Asiatic measure of those days. I had gone to the meeting with no pre-conceived resolution. It was born at the meeting. The creation is still expanding. But assuming that God had endowed me with full powers (which He never does), I would at once ask the English to lay down arms, free all their vassals, take pride in being called "little Englanders", and defy all the totalitarians of the world to do their worst. Englishmen will then die unresistingly and go down to history as heroes of non-violence. I would further invite Indians to co-operate with Englishmen in this godly martyrdom. It will be an indissoluble partnership drawn up in letters of the blood of their own bodies, not of their so-called enemies. But I have no such general power. Non-violence is a plant of slow growth. It grows imperceptibly but surely. And even at the risk of being misunderstood, I must act in obedience to "*the still small voice*".

On the train to Simla, 25-9-39
Harijan, 30-9-1939

89

INDIA'S ATTITUDE

On the 27th August last, i.e. just before the senseless war broke out, Shrimati Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya wrote to me as follows :

"I have sent you an appeal through *The Bombay Chronicle*, asking you to voice the attitude of India and of the exploited peoples of the East on the present situation. What I meant was not a mere reiteration of our old position that we can have nothing to do with this imperialist war, but something more than that. The present conflict is mainly centred round the usual scramble for colonies, or spheres of influence as they are now called in polite phraseology. On this question the world thinks there are only two opinions, for it hears only two views : one which believes in the maintaining of the *status quo* ; the other which wants a change but on the same basis, in other words, a redistribution of the loot and the right to exploit, which of course means war. It is in the very nature of things that such a redistribution can never come about without an armed conflict. Whether there will be anyone or anything left to enjoy, of course, is another question. But the world is mainly torn between these two. If the thesis of the one is accepted, then that of the other should also be. For, if England and France have the right to rule over large tracts and big nations, then Germany and Italy have an equal right. There is as little moral justification in the former countries crying halt to Hitler as there is in his what he calls his rightful claims.

That there is a third view the world hardly seems to think, for it rarely hears it. And it is so essential that it should find expression : the voice of the people who are mere pawns in the game. Neither Danzig nor the Polish Corridor is the issue. The issue is the principle on which the whole of this present Western civilization is based : the right of the strong to rule and exploit the weak. Therefore it is centred round the whole colonial question, and Hitler and Mussolini are never tired of reminding the world of that. And that is exactly the reason why England has raised the cry of the Empire in danger. This question, therefore, vitally concerns all of us.

We are against the *status quo*. We are fighting against it for we want a change in it. But our alternative is not war, for we know that the real solution does not lie there. We have an alternative to offer which is the only solution of this horrible muddle and the key to future world peace. It is this which

> I would like to be placed before the world. It may seem today like a cry in the wilderness; still we know that it is the voice which will ultimately prevail; and it is those hands which seem so feeble before these mailed fists that will finally reshape a battered humanity.
>
> You are eminently fitted to give voice to it. India has, I think, a peculiar place today in the colonies of the world. It has both a moral prestige and organizational strength enjoyed by few colonies. The others look to it for a lead in many matters. It has already shown to the world a superior technique of struggle whose moral value the world is bound to appreciate some day. India has, therefore, to tell a very distraught and maddened world that there is another path that humanity must tread, if it would save itself from these periodical disasters and bring peace and harmony to a bleeding world. It is only those who have suffered so much against this system and who are bravely struggling to change it that can speak with all the conviction and moral basis necessary, speak not only for themselves but all the exploited peoples of the world."

I am sorry I had not seen Shrimati Kamaladevi's letter to *The Chronicle*. Try as I will, I simply cannot do adequate justice to the reading of newspapers. The letter then remained on my file for want of time to deal with it. But I think delay has not affected the object of her letter. Perhaps this is the psychological moment for me to express what is or should be India's attitude. I agree with Kamaladevi's analysis of the motives of the parties to the war. Both are fighting for their existence and for the furtherance of their policies. There is, however, this great difference between the two: however incomplete or equivocal the declarations of the Allies are, the world has interpreted them to mean that they are fighting for saving democracy. Herr Hitler is fighting for the extension of the German boundaries, although he was told that he should allow his claims to be submitted to an impartial tribunal for examination. He contemptuously rejected the way of peace or persuasion and chose that of the sword. Hence my sympathy for the cause of the Allies. But my sympathies must not be interpreted to mean endorsement, in any shape or form, of the doctrine of the sword for the defence even of proved right. Proved right should be capable of being vindicated by right means as against the rude, i.e. sanguinary, means. Man may and should shed his own blood for establishing what he considers to be his 'right'. He may not shed the blood of his opponent who disputes his 'right'.

India as represented by the Congress has been fighting in order to prove her 'right', not by the sword but by the non-violent method. And she has carved out for herself a unique place and prestige in the world, although she is yet far — let us hope, not very far — from the independence of her dream. Her novel method has evidently struck the imagination of the world. It has the right to expect India to play a decisive part in this war, which no people of the world have wanted, by insisting that the peace this time is not to be a mockery designed to share among the victors the spoils of war and to humiliate the vanquished. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who has a right to speak for the Congress, has said in stately language that the peace must mean freedom for those who are held in bondage by the imperialist powers of the world. I have every hope that the Congress will also be able to show the world that the power that armaments give to defend right is nothing compared to the power that non-violence gives to do the same thing and that too with better show of reason. Armaments can show no reason, they can make only a pretence of it.

Sevagram, 9-10-39
Harijan, 14-10-1939

90

ON TRIAL

In the course of the conversation with the members of the Working Committee, I discovered that their non-violence had never gone beyond fighting the British Government with that weapon. I had hugged the belief that congressmen had appreciated the logical result of the practice of non-violence for the past twenty years in fighting the biggest imperialist power in the world. But in great experiments like that of non-violence, hypothetical questions have hardly any play. I myself used to say in answer to questions that when we had actually acquired independence we would know whether we could defend ourselves non-violently or not. But today the question is no longer hypothetical. Whether there is on the part of the British Government a favourable declaration or not, the Congress has to decide upon the course it would adopt in the event of an invasion of India. For though there may be no settlement with the Government, the Congress has to declare its policy and say whether it would fight the invading host violently or non-violently.

So far as I can read the Working Committee's mind after a fairly full discussion, the members think that congressmen are unprepared for non-violent defence against armed invasion.

This is tragic. Surely the means adopted for driving an enemy from one's house must, more or less, coincide with those to be adopted for keeping him out of the house. If anything, the latter process must be easier. The fact, however, is that our fight has not been one of non-violent resistance of the strong. It has been one of passive resistance of the weak. Therefore there is no spontaneous response in our hearts, at this supreme moment, to an undying faith in the efficacy of non-violence. The Working Committee, therefore, wisely said that they were not ready for the logical step. The tragedy of the situation is that, if the Congress is to throw in its lot with those who believe in the necessity of armed defence of India, the past twenty years will have been years of gross neglect of the primary duty of congressmen to learn the science of armed warfare. And

I fear that history will hold me, as the general of the fight, responsible for the tragedy. The future historian will say that I should have perceived that the nation was learning not non-violence of the strong but merely passivity of the weak, and that I should have, therefore, provided for congressmen's military training.

Being obsessed with the idea that somehow or other India will learn true non-violence, it would not occur to me to invite my co-workers to train themselves for armed defence. On the contrary, I used to discountenance all sword-play and the display of stout *lathis*. Nor am I even now repentant for the past. I have the unquenchable faith that, of all the countries in the world, India is the one country which can learn the art of non-violence, that if the test were applied even now, there would be found, perhaps, thousands of men and women who would be willing to die without harbouring malice against their persecutors. I have harangued crowds and told them repeatedly that they might have to suffer much including death by shooting. Did not thousands of men and women brave hardships during the salt campaign equal to any that soldiers are called upon to bear? No different capacity is required from what has been already evinced, if India has to contend against an invader. Only it will have to be on vaster scale.

One thing ought not to be forgotten. India unarmed would not require to be destroyed through poison gas or bombardment. It is the Maginot line that has made the Siegfried line necessary. And vice versa. Defence of India by the present methods has been necessary because she is an appendage of Britain. Free India can have no enemy. And if her people have learnt the art of saying resolutely 'no' and acting up to it, I dare say, no one would want to invade her. Our economy would be so modelled as to prove no temptation for the exploiter.

But some congressmen will say: "Apart from the British, India has so many martial races within her border that they will want to put up a fight for the country which is as much theirs as ours." This is perfectly true. I am therefore talking, for the moment, only of congressmen. How would they act in the event of an invasion? We shall never convert the whole of India to our creed unless we are prepared to die for it.

The opposite course appeals me. Already, the bulk of the army is manned by the Mussalmans of the North, Sikhs and

Gurkhas. If the masses of the South and the Centre wish to become militarized, the Congress, which is supposed to represent them, will have to enter into competition with the former. The Congress will then have to be party to an enormous military budget. There may be all these things without the Congress consent. It will make all the difference in the world whether the Congress is party to them or not. The world is looking for something new and unique from India. The Congress will be lost in the crowd, if it wears the same old outworn armour that the world is wearing today. The Congress has a name because it represents non-violence as a political weapon *par excellence*. If the Congress helps the Allies as a representative of non-violence, it will give to the Allied cause a prestige and a power which will be invaluable in deciding the ultimate fate of the war. But the members of the Working Committee have honestly and bravely not made the profession of such non-violence.

My position is, therefore, confined to myself alone. I have to find out whether I have any fellow-traveller along the lonely path. If I am in the minority of one, I must try to make converts. Whether one or many, I must declare my faith that it is better for India to discard violence altogether even for defending her borders. For India to enter into the race for armaments is to court suicide. With the loss of India to non-violence the last hope of the world will be gone. I must live up to the creed I have professed for the last half a century, and hope to the last breath that India will make non-violence her creed, preserve man's dignity, and prevent him from reverting to the type from which he is supposed to have raised himself.

Sevagram, 10-10-39
Harijan, 14-10-1939

91

A POSER

A Britisher has written to Deenabandhu Andrews a letter on the war expounding his own views. He is an ardent pacifist. Deenabandhu has shared the letter with me. In it occur the following paragraphs:

> "For India too I think that this is a very critical time. The danger I see is that Britain may promise full Dominion Status or something of the kind, and as a result India will raise an army and become one more military-minded nation. Her witness for the way of non-violence and soul force would then be largely discounted.
>
> How can Gandhiji as a believer in non-violence ask for clarification of war aims with a view to getting India's support for Britain in this way of war? The only thing that he can do and that we should all be doing is to build up an army of men and women who are committed to the way of love and forgiveness and to receive, but never to return, violence. We have to work this out to see how it will alter our daily life as well as all our thinking and acting towards other communities and nations. We have to be disciplined in this and also to learn to act together as one man. Along this line I see tremendous possibilities.
>
> Of course, we should also use all the influence we can to urge Britain to acknowledge and put into practice full democracy in India, as it is a high principle quite apart from whether India helps Britain in the war or not."

The danger that the writer senses is real. I dealt with it last week. The writer cavils at my sympathy with the Allies. I have shown it as an out-and-out believer in non-violence, even because of my belief. Whilst all violence is bad and must be condemned in the abstract, it is permissible for, it is even the duty of, a believer in *ahimsa* to distinguish between the aggressor and the defender. Having done so, he will side with the defender in a non-violent manner, i.e. give his life in saving him. His intervention is likely to bring a speedier end to the duel, and may even result in bringing about peace between the combatants. Applying the argument to the present war, if the Congress actively sides with the Allies in a non-violent way, the Congress assistance will lift the Allied cause to a high moral

plane, and the Congress influence will be effectively used in the cause of peace. What is more it will be the special business of the Congress to see that, if the war is fought to a finish, no humiliation is heaped upon the vanquished. That is the role I have conceived for the Congress. The declaration of independence has become a necessity. The question having been raised, the Congress cannot help Britain, if Britain is secretly fighting for imperialism while it declares to the world that the fight is for saving democracies. For Britain to be in the right, a clear declaration of her war aim is a necessity, irrespective of the Congress policy.

Sevagram, 16-10-39
Harijan, 21-10-1939

92

HINDU-MUSLIM CLASHES

If proof were wanted to show that the non-violence of the Congress was in effect violence in suspension or inactive violence, it is furnished by the effective though quite indisciplined violence exhibited in Hindu-Muslim clashes. Had the thousands of Hindus and Muslims who took part in the Khilafat agitation been non-violent at heart, they could never have been violent towards one another as they are continually found to be. Nor can it be said that those who take part in the clashes are not congressmen. If we rule out all those who resort to violence as non-congressmen, the Congress will cease to be a mass organization. For the combatants in these clashes are derived from the masses. Moreover one finds today violence resorted to by rival congressmen at Congress meetings. The gross indiscipline and fraud practised at Congress elections are all illustrations of Congress violence. It is difficult to say, therefore, who if any, are non-violent congressmen. If they were in a majority in the Congress and if they played an effective part in Hindu-Muslim clashes, they could stop them or at least give their lives in stopping them. If the bulk of congressmen were truly non-violent, Muslims would be obliged to confess that congressmen could not be accused of anti-Muslim bias. It is not enough for

congressmen to say that they have not been found guilty of incorrect attitude. I may be proved to be legally correct, but may fail miserably if my action was examined in non-violent scales. But this non-violence has to be non-violence of the brave and the strong. It must come from inward conviction. I have, therefore, not hesitated to say that it is better to be violent, if there is violence in our breasts, than to put on the cloak of non-violence to cover impotence. Violence is any day preferable to impotence. There is hope for a violent man to become non-violent. There is no such hope for the impotent.

Sevagram, 17-10-39
Harijan, 21-10-1939

93

UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT ?

Several British friends are puzzled and ask, "Have you really said you will give unconditional support to Great Britain as you are reported to have said ?" The origin of this report lies in my very first statement after my talk with the Viceroy. The phrase 'unconditional support' does not occur in that statement. But had the Congress appreciated the position I took up, Congress support would have been unconditional in the sense that the Congress would not have asked for a clarification of Britain's war aims. But the Working Committee could not honestly take up that position. Therefore it passed, as it had every right and justification for passing, the resolution it did. Events have shown the prudence of the course adopted by the Working Committee. But had it waived the demand for the declaration of war aims, the support would have been unconditional. Remember, according to its constitution, the Congress is a non-violent body. Therefore its support would have been purely moral. It has no soldiers to supply, it has no money to give. But it has its good wishes. In my opinion those good wishes would have been more than many battalions. The Congress support would have put the British cause on an unassailable moral basis. It would have made the British case just, beyond measure. All the dependent races of the earth would have felt an indescribable glow of freedom. British moral stock would

have shot up high at a bound. That is what the Congress unconditional support would have meant.

But God had willed otherwise. British statesmen had not faith enough in the Congress profession of non-violence. I must confess that the Congress could not pass the test to the satisfaction of a strict though just examiner. Anyway my British friends should have no difficulty in understanding my position. Of course it is open to them to argue that as a war resister I could not even give moral support. I have already said in these columns that I do not hold such a view. It is open to a war resister to judge between two combatants and wish success to the one who has justice on his side. By so judging he is more likely to bring peace between the two than by remaining a mere spectator.

Sevagram, 30-10-39
Harijan, 4-11-1939

94

THE HOUR OF TRIAL

> "If India takes up the doctrine of the sword, she may gain momentary victory. Then India will cease to be the pride of my heart. I am wedded to India because I owe my all to her. I believe absolutely that she has a mission for the world. She is not to copy Europe blindly. India's acceptance of the doctrine of the sword will be the hour of my trial. I hope I shall not be found wanting. My religion has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend my love for India herself. My life is dedicated to service of India through the religion of non-violence which I believe to be the root of Hinduism."
>
> "The religion of non-violence is not meant merely for the *rishis* and saints. It is meant for the common people as well."

With the Working Committee

I quote these words from an article Gandhiji wrote in August 1920, but it looks as though they were uttered today. With that living faith in non-violence as the peculiar contribution of India to the world, he has tried to steer the course of our ship in fair weather and foul. Often enough the sky has been

darkened by spray, but we have never lost sight of the star. The present storm threatens to obliterate the star from our view, but the pilot has made it his business to warn us day in and day out against losing sight of the star which alone can guide us to the end of the voyage.

At the termination of the Working Committee meeting, therefore, Gandhiji asked the members to consider the question again, and decide once for all what the Congress and congressmen were going to do. The question affected not only our relations with government but the relations between community and community.

Gandhiji's suggestion was discussed for many hours, but no conclusion could be reached. At the next meeting of the Working Committee the question will come up again and a final decision taken. In the meanwhile members will have had enough time to think over the matter.

With the Gandhi Seva Sangh

The question has been engaging all Gandhiji's time, so much so that he has gone into perpetual silence except with people whom he sees by appointment, and often he wakes up in the early hours of the morning thinking about it. On the 25th morning he woke up at one o'clock, and was thinking about what he should say to the members of the executive of the Gandhi Seva Sangh whom he was to meet in the afternoon. So to them he said:

"The problem haunts me. It gives me no rest. I have described in *Harijan* the position of the junior members of the Working Committee. Theirs was a difficult position. They were torn between loyalty to a principle and loyalty to their colleagues. But their eagerness to make their position clear to me was most welcome. It shows that we are all votaries of Truth, and even our mental struggles and conflicts arise out of our anxiety to be faithful to it. We had a very fine discussion in the Working Committee yesterday, and we discussed threadbare the position of the members as individuals and as representatives of the Congress and the people. The question with you is different. For you are here in your individual capacity, and you have to decide your conduct no matter what Congress or congressmen may think. The question is thus much simpler for you. Will you adopt an attitude of brotherliness to one who

has done your dear ones a grievous injury ? Supposing Rajendra Babu was attacked, would you retaliate or rather stand between Rajendra Babu and the assailant and bear cheerfully the blows meant for him ? You will do the latter, if you have shed all fear of death and injury to limbs, and all considerations for the domestic ties that bind you. But unless you have nothing but brotherliness for those that despitefully use you, your resolution that you would stand by the principle of non-violence through thick and thin will have no meaning. It would be far better to wind up the Sangh than to have an empty resolution.

"Non-violence is not a cloistered virtue, confined only to the *rishi* and the cave-dweller. It is capable of being practised by the millions, not with full knowledge of its implications, but because it is the law of our species. It distinguishes man from the brute. But man has not shed the brute in him. He has to strive to do so. This striving applies to the practice of non-violence, not to the belief in it. I cannot strive to believe in a principle : I either believe in it or I do not. And if I believe in it, I must bravely strive to practise it. *Ahimsa* is an attribute of the brave. Cowardice and *ahimsa* do not go together any more than water and fire. It is that *ahimsa* that every member of the Gandhi Seva Sangh has to make a conscious effort to develop in himself.

"We have often thought about this question, but the hour of our trial has arrived today, as much with reference to war as with the struggle for Swaraj and equally with reference to Hindu-Muslim unity. Remember also that your non-violence cannot operate effectively unless you have faith in the spinning wheel. I would ask you to read *Hind Swaraj* with my eyes and see therein the chapter on how to make India non-violent. You cannot build non-violence on a factory civilization, but it can be built on self-contained villages. Even if Hitler was so minded, he could not devastate seven hundred thousand non-violent villages. He would himself become non-violent in the process. Rural economy as I have conceived it eschews exploitation altogether, and exploitation is the essence of violence. You have, therefore, to be rural-minded before you can be non-violent, and to be rural-minded you have to have faith in the spinning wheel."

Posers

The members slept over this discourse and met Gandhiji again the next day. Numerous questions were troubling them, as they should everyone who is a votary of *ahimsa*. But out of regard for Gandhiji's time they limited themselves to a few.

"How can a believer in the non-violence of your conception be a minister ?"

"I fear he cannot in the present state of things," said Gandhiji. "We have seen that our ministers have had to resort to violence even as the British government in the pre-autonomy days. It was inevitable perhaps. Had congressmen been truly non-violent, there would have been no resort to force. But the Congress majorities were not based on unadulterated non-violence. A minister said the other day that, although he had not given up an iota of non-violence, he could not do without resorting to the minimum of firing. He had resorted to it only to the extent that it was unavoidable. He may have said it then ; he may not say it again if I can help it. For, if he goes in again, he will have made his position clear, and he will represent a House that is predominantly non-violent. In other words, he will take office, if he is sure that the people would let him carry on the government on a non-violent basis."

"But may it not be that whereas a non-violent minister will confine violence to the lowest minimum, one who does not believe in non-violence would observe no such restraint ?"

"That belief is a delusion. All those who are using violence today make the same claim. Hitler too would say the same thing. General Dyer was acclaimed as the hero of the hour by the House of Lords because his object was said to be to prevent the spread of mob violence. Soviet Russia believes its violence is a transitional stage to the establishment of an order without violence. In the present state of our belief and practice it may be better to wind up the Sangh, leaving each one to grow unfettered."

"But the suggestion is being made," said Kishorlalbhai, "that we may confine the membership to those who are engaged in constructive work."

"That suggestion is good, and we can conceivably convert the Sangh into such a body and then try each of us in our individual capacity to purify ourselves as much as we can. For

non-violence is impossible without self-purification. Let us, therefore, be members of a self-purification association, but no association is necessary for that purpose. Therefore let us try, each in our own way, to face difficulties and problems as they come and see how far we can go. In Hudli, two years ago, I asked you to help in the elections and in sending the best possible men to the legislature. I gave advice in the atmosphere as it existed then. I cannot give you that advice today. In fact the time may have come when it becomes necessary for such of you as believe in the non-violence of the brave to retire from the Congress as I did in 1934."

"How do you think that the masses can practise non-violence, when we know that they are all prone to anger, hate, ill-will? They are known to fight for the most trivial things."

"They are, and yet I think they can practise non-violence for the common good. Do you think the thousands of women that collected contraband salt had ill-will against anyone? They knew that the Congress or Gandhi had asked them to do certain things, and they did those things in faith and hope. To my mind the most perfect demonstration of non-violence was in Champaran. Did the thousands of ryots who rose up in revolt against the agrarian evils harbour the least ill-will against the government or the planters? Their belief in non-violence was unintelligent, even as the belief in the earth being round with many is unintelligent. But their belief in their leaders was genuine, and that was enough. With those who lead it is another matter. Their belief has got to be intelligent, and they have to live up to all the implications of the belief."

"But then are not the masses the world over like that?"

"They are not, for others have not that background of non-violence."

"But if there was non-violence ingrained in our masses, how should they have come to this state of slavery?"

"*There* indeed is what I flatter myself is going to be my contribution. I want that non-violence of the weak to become non-violence of the brave. It may be a dream, but I have to strive for its realization."

M. D.

Sevagram, 29-10-39
Harijan, 4-11-1939

95

SINDH RIOTS

I have been following the riots in Sindh with painful interest. Many people delude themselves with the belief that I possess powers to remedy all wrongs. I wish I had them, though I am not sure that such possession will be an unmixed blessing. I should make people helpless, if I made an indiscriminate use of such powers. And they would be of no use, if I might not use them freely. As it is, I use what powers I have to the fullest extent. Thank God, they are too limited to be harmful. My chief work, however, is to teach people to help themselves.

Here is a pathetic wire from Shikarpur:

> "Riots, loot, incendiarism. Sukkur district villages Hindus mercilessly butchered, women and girls raped and kidnapped. Hindu life, property unsafe. Situation most critical. Government policy not firm. Pray send inquiry committee immediately to see situation personally. — President, Hindu General Panchayat."

It is the third of its kind from Sindh. I took no notice of the first two mainly because I was pre-occupied in Allahabad and I had no concrete consolation to offer. The Shikarpur Panchayat has come to the wrong person for help. For I am myself helpless. The Congress has not yet sufficiently advanced in non-violence to deal with riots and the like. It must develop it enough to deal with such situations if it is to retain its prestige. I suggested 'peace brigades', but the suggestion proved premature if not unworkable. No doubt the Sindh government should be able to protect life and property of the people within their jurisdiction. Evidently the matter has gone beyond their control. Sindh is nominally autonomous and to that extent less able to protect life and property than the preceding government. For it has never had previous training in the policing or the military arts. I have shown in previous writings that the central government is impotent to prevent loss of life, property and worse during riots. It is able to check their spread and punish the wrong-doers when it wishes. It is organized solely

for the protection of imperial trade and therefore for the maintenance of peace in so far as it is necessary for the safety of that trade. Hence it is ill equipped for real protection of the people. Such protection involves the training of the people in the art of self-defence and securing their co-operation in quelling riots, etc. This would be putting imperial rule in jeopardy.

Now the only effective way in which I can help the Sindhis is to show them the way of non-violence. But that cannot be learnt in a day. The other way is the way the world has followed hitherto, i.e. armed defence of life and property. God helps only those who help themselves. The Sindhis are no exception. They must learn the art of defending themselves against robbers, raiders and the like. If they do not feel safe and are too weak to defend themselves, they should leave the place which has proved too inhospitable to live in.

Sevagram, 28-11-39.
Harijan, 2-12-1939

96
IN GOD'S GOOD HANDS

"Dear Friend,

I am unknown to you personally, but my wife and I came very near to being your host and hostess when you visited the Greenfield Mill at Darwen, Lancashire, in 1931. I think I was the first to express the hope that you might be willing to meet personally our cotton operatives during your stay in England that year, a period of distress through widespread unemployment in Lancashire; and this was conveyed to you through my friend C. F. Andrews. Just before the time for the visit arrived, however, we left our Darwen home and our work as welfare supervisors at the Greenfield factory, to start a new life in charge of the Quaker International Centre in Berlin; and you were entertained by our friends and successors, Charles and Harriet Haworth.

Through 5½ years' residence in Germany with our family of four young children we have come to know and to love very many people in that country, and have also watched and shared at first hand all the tragic developments, moral and political, of this time. We were, however, already well acquainted with Germany and her people through the Quaker relief work for

starving children after the last war, in which we had been privileged to take part.

"I read with deep interest and inspiration, in the early days of this war, a few lines written by you in *Harijan*, which have been a great help and comfort to me in these troubled times. They are as follows: 'I personally would not purchase my own country's freedom by violence, even if such a thing were possible... My faith that what is gained by the sword will also be lost by the sword, is imperishable.' I have been encouraged, after mentioning my thoughts to my friend Agatha Harrison, to write and tell you what I have had so much in mind during these first distressful weeks of war. She has kindly let me see something of what you have written on the subject of the war situation, which helped me to understand your attitude towards it, but still leaves me under the sense of a deep concern which I now ask permission to lay before you.

"I meet so often nowadays even fine and convinced friends of peace who, in view of the brutal suppression of independence in countries like Czechoslovakia and Poland, feel themselves in a moral dilemma; who take the view that when such things happen war is inevitable and even right for their country, in the attempt to restore what has been lost — though as individuals they would probably dissociate themselves from it. I have wondered whether this is not the moment when such an acknowledged spiritual prophet and leader as you are, might give a clarion call to the whole world, pointing to another way than the senseless gamble and destruction of war; another way, not merely for the settling of disputes but far more important, for resistance to evil and even for the attainment of political aims. The war method, as we experienced in 1914-1918, seems inevitably to vitiate its own ends, however good these may be at the outset; whereas the moral means of non-violence and redemptive love do but strengthen and purify the aims, in so far as these are based on moral right and justice. This you have taught us. It seems to me that a lead from one with your spiritual authority along the lines of a better way than war to help the stricken and oppressed, whether individuals or nations, might come with redeeming power to many who find themselves in the distress of a moral dilemma at present time, and release spiritual energies which, because of this dilemma, are lamed and useless, or are prostituted in the attempt to supply uplift and inspiration for the pursuit of a holy war for civilization, freedom — or of the mere negative aim of destroying Hitlerism by successful rivalry in its own methods.

"I have no moral right to judge — sadly the contrary — but I know that you appreciate frankness, and I therefore venture to confess myself puzzled that, so far from seizing this opportunity

to proclaim the better way in which you have been such a magnificent pioneer, you appear (I feel sure I am mistaken or misunderstand) to be thinking mainly of what political advantage for the cause of independence in India can be gained from the war situation. One almost has the impression that the opportunity which war presents is welcomed, and that support for the Allies in the attempt to gain their ends through war would be gladly given if an adequate bargain were forthcoming.

I have no special knowledge of Indian affairs, but, relying on the judgment of my best friends who have close association with the best opinion in India, I am eager for the realization of their hopes and yours; but I would hope for this as the outcome of a liberal movement of mind in our own people and Government as part of a generous desire and determination for a new and better world instead of one filled with aggression and imperialist domination — rather than as a bargain by imperialist Britain without any change of mind, primarily for the purpose of obtaining the material support of India in winning the war.

My heart cries to you out of its distress and despair caused by the war. I have seen so much that is good in the German people, the self-giving idealism of its youth whom I love, as well as the evil with which I am so intimately acquainted through trying to help the victims. I have been in a Nazi prison, and have believed that through my suffering there has been shown to me a nobler way to help the splendid young men of Germany and of my own country, than the way we are about to employ, of driving millions of them to slaughter one another. I believe that many people throughout the world are longing to see the way out of this evil into which we are slowly slipping deeper and deeper, until it may soon be too late. Perhaps you alone can help us. I write to you in deep concern to beg you to consider whether it may not be laid upon you to do so.

With deep esteem and love,

Your friend sincerely,
CORDER CATCHPOOL"

49, Parliament Hill,
London, N. W. 3.

I know that this letter reflects the attitude of many Englishmen who look to me for showing the better way. Sir Radhakrishnan's collection of tributes on my completing seventy years has deepened the hope of thousands of peace lovers. But I know what a poor instrument I am for the fulfilment of that hope. Admirers have given me credit I do not deserve. I am not able to testify that India furnishes the world with a good example of non-violence of the strong and therefore as a substitute for armed resistance against an aggressor. India undoubtedly has

shown the efficacy of passive non-violence as a weapon of the weak. But useful as it is as a substitute of terrorism, I claim no newness or merit for it. It is no contribution to the peace movement.

It is no wonder that my identification with the Congress demand appears to contradict my previous writing quoted by my correspondent. There is, however, no contradiction. Even now as then I would not gain independence at the cost of non-violence. The critic might retort that, if the British Government made the required declaration, I would be helping the Allies and thereby taking part in violence. The retort would be reasonable but for the fact that the additional help that Britain would gain from the Congress would be purely moral. The Congress would contribute neither men nor money. The moral influence would be used on the side of peace. I have already said in these columns that my non-violence does recognize different species of violence — defensive and offensive. It is true that in the long run the difference is obliterated, but the initial merit persists. A non-violent person is bound, when the occasion arises, to say which side is just. Thus I wished success to the Abyssinians, the Spaniards, the Czechs, the Chinese and the Poles, though in each case I wished that they could have offered non-violent resistance. In the present case, if the Congress could justify the British case on the high ground professed by Mr. Chamberlain, India declared free would throw in her whole moral weight on the side of peace. The part I am playing is, in my opinion, strictly non-violent. There is no spirit of bargaining behind the Congress demand which itself is wholly moral. There is no desire to embarrass the Government. There is to be no precipitate civil disobedience. Care is being taken to meet every just objection to the Congress demand and to smooth every difficulty in the way of Great Britain making the requisite declaration. The greatest strain is being put upon impatient congressmen spoiling for a fight though non-violent. I myself want to be able to play an effective part in bringing peace nearer. I might be able to do so if India becomes in fact an independent ally of Britain, though the legal process is delayed till the war is ended.

But who am I ? I have no strength save what God gives me. I have no authority over my countrymen save the purely moral.

If He holds me to be a pure instrument for the spread of non-violence in the place of the awful violence now ruling the earth, He will give the strength and show me the way. My greatest weapon is mute prayer. The cause of peace is, therefore, in God's good hands. Nothing can happen but by His will expressed in His eternal, changeless Law which is He. We neither know Him nor His Law save through the glass darkly. But the faint glimpse of the Law is sufficient to fill me with joy, hope, and faith in the future.

Sevagram, 5-12-39
Harijan, 9-12-1939

97

SINDH TRAGEDY

I have before me several letters from Sindh and a longish report from Dr. Choithram over the recent riots in Sukkur and Shikarpur. The Sindh Hindus should remember that Sindh has a national government. Though for the sake of brevity I have often used the term Congress government, the proper expression is national democratic government as distinguished from foreign bureaucratic government, which it replaces. Whilst in discussing domestic differences and party politics we have to speak of Congress and Muslim League governments, we must for all other purposes think and speak in terms of national government. And so those who feel aggrieved must appeal to their provincial national governments and cultivate public opinion in favour of justice and public tranquillity. It would be wrong always to think in communal terms. I know that we may not shut our eyes to hard facts. But to attribute everything to the communal spirit is a sign of inferiority complex. It may well perpetuate what is yet a temporary distemper in the national life.

But, as I have already suggested, contrasted with irresponsible bureaucracy, national governments would be found to be weak in action because of their responsibility to the people in whose name and by whose goodwill alone they can rule. They can, therefore, deal with crimes with more or less success, but

they will be found to be powerless to deal with popular upheavals which communal riots are. British military aid will not always be at their disposal. National governments will cease to be national, if they have to depend on British military aid. Moreover, if the Congress policy of non-violence becomes universal among all parties, military and even police aid must become taboo. Before the other parties can be expected to become non-violent, Congressmen have to express non-violence in ample measure in their daily conduct. Be that, however, as it may, I can only advise the afflicted people of Sindh in terms of non-violence.

The question in Sindh is not really one between Hindus and Muslims. It is essentially one between weak people and strong. Muslims fight among themselves as badly as with Hindus. Hindus have also been known to fight among themselves. It will be wrong to weigh ferocity in golden scales.

Hinduism has become a synonym for weakness and Islam for physical strength. Hindus, although they have been taught to believe in *ahimsa*, have not shown *en masse* the strength of *ahimsa*, have never shown its superiority, when matched against physical strength. I have maintained that superiority over physical strength, however overwhelming, is the core of *ahimsa*, and I have further maintained that this non-violence can be exercised as well by individuals as by groups of them, yea, even by millions together. The experiment is still in the making. Sufficient evidence has accumulated during the past twenty years to show that the experiment is worth making. Nothing can possibly be lost by continuing it, provided of course that the non-violence is of the standard brand.

Nothing has come under my observation to show that there was in Sukkur or Shikarpur even one person who believed in and practised non-violence of the strong. Had there been one, we would surely have known of him as we know of Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi. One such person can any day give a better account of himself than one armed to the teeth.

There are many Congressmen in Sukkur and Shikarpur, but they are not non-violently organized. It is not their fault. They know no better. As I have been repeatedly saying nowadays, our non-violence has not been of the strong. Weak people

cannot develop it all of a sudden. But I have no other drug in my chest. I can only prescribe what I have and what has never failed. I can only, therefore, say: 'Try and try again until you succeed.' In the composition of the truly brave there should be no malice, no anger, no distrust, no fear of death or physical hurt. Non-violence is certainly not for those who lack these essential qualities. Wherever there are such persons they should be able to cover the weak ones, provided of course that they would listen to their helpers.

Let the weak ones never rely upon armed help. Such help will only make them weaker. If they have not the capacity for non-violent resistance, they should learn the art of defending themselves. It does not require a strong body; it requires a stout heart. The African Negroes have become, or were 25 years ago, so terror-stricken that they could not face a White lad — a pigmy compared to the giant-framed Negroes. White children were trained from their infancy not to fear the Negroes. The first lesson, therefore, for those who will learn how to defend themselves is to shed the fear of being hurt or being killed. I would like them to observe the laws of the game. Just as there is such a thing as honour among thieves, there should surely be honour between combatants. One hears so often of children and old men being butchered, women being outraged. If men must become beasts, there might even then be some decency observed. Religion is outraged when an outrage is perpetrated in its name. Almost all the riots in this unhappy land take place in the name of religion, though they might have a political motive behind them. My chief point is that the existing situation is intolerable. Cowardice should have no place in the national dictionary.

I have suggested *hijrat*. I repeat the suggestion. It is not unpractical. People do not know its value. High and mighty have been known to have resorted to it before now. Planned *hijrat* requires courage and forethought. The second book of the Old Testament is known as Exodus. It is an account of the planned flight of the Israelites. In exile they prepared for a military career. In modern times we have the example of the flight of the Doukhobours from Russia owing to persecution. Theirs was no military career. On the contrary they were

non-violent. There is, therefore, nothing wrong, dishonourable or cowardly in self-imposed exile. India is a vast country. Though poor, it is well able to admit of inter-migration especially of those who are capable, hard-working and honest. The people of Sukkur and Shikarpur have all the three qualities. They must appeal to the Government. Only they can give very little help. Apart from political pacts local heads among Hindus and Muslims may meet with mutual profits. It can do no body or party any good to promote mutual slaughter and consequent increase in the existing ill-will. But if no honourable local settlement is arrived at, and if the local residents do not feel able to defend themselves and their families and possessions non-violently or violently, I have no doubt that they should vacate the place in which they live in perpetual fear of their lives and honour of their womenfolk.

Sevagram, 1-1-40
Harijan, 6-1-1940

98

SINDH TRAGEDY

Q. In your article "Sindh Tragedy" you have advised the oppressed Hindus of Sindh to perform *hijrat* if they cannot protect their honour and self-respect by remaining in Sindh. Where do you expect them to go? Who will provide them the wherewithal in their place of refuge? May I further ask you if the remedy of *hijrat* is meant for the Hindus only? Why do you not advise *hijrat* to the Mussalmans in the Congress provinces who complain so loudly of 'oppression'? As it is you have given them weightage in provinces in which they are in a minority and a statutory majority in the Punjab where they are numerically superior.

A. My advice to migrate is for all who feel oppressed and cannot live without loss of self-respect in a particular place. If the Muslims where they are in a minority were really oppressed and they sought my advice, I should give them the same advice I have given to the Sindh Hindus. But, as a general rule, they

are capable of holding their own even when they are in a minority. I have already told the Sindhis that, if they have the bravery to defend themselves even though they are a handful, they should not leave the places where they are settled. My advice is meant for those who, though they are conscious of self-respect, lack the strength that comes from non-violence or the capacity to return blow for blow.

The question what the refugees should do after migration is surely secondary. A few thousand of them can be easily absorbed in a vast country like India. Sindhis are enterprising. They are scattered all over the world. I hardly think any public appeal will be necessary. Let them know that there are refugees from Limbdi, who are bravely and silently bearing their exile. A keen sense of honour turns every privation into a joy. But perhaps migration will be unnecessary. I see signs of Muslim leaders realizing their responsibility and making arrangements to create among the Hindus concerned a sense of security. If this happens, it would be as it should be.

The question of my befriending the Ali Brothers is surely irrelevant to the great issue I have raised. I am not sorry for anything I have done in connection with communal unity. I should repeat the same thing under similar circumstances. Neither community has lost by the unity of the Khilafat days, temporary though it unfortunately proved to be. You are wrong in holding me responsible for the Communal Decision. It has nothing to commend itself to any community except the solid fact that we are living under it and that we have not yet found an agreed formula to replace it.

Sevagram, 29-1-40
Harijan, 3-2-1940

99

A PACIFIST'S DOUBTS

I give these details in order to give the reader an idea of the development and evolution of pacifism. No wonder then that, whilst the pacifists appreciated the position taken up by India, their difficulty was how, if Gandhiji accepted the Allied cause as just and said that he would pray for the victory of Britain, he had advised the Congress not to offer its co-operation to Britain.

Whether the questioner's difficulty arose from pacifism or from the Congress demand for declaration of the war aims was not quite clear. But Gandhiji explained that any co-operation or non-co-operation that the Congress could offer would be moral and not material. Materially Britain's position would not be affected by either attitude, for the contribution in men and money that Britain exacted from India as a subject nation would continue. When a non-violent India wished Britain victory, it was not victory for Britain, right or wrong, but victory for Britain which in going to war against Germany was less in the wrong and more in the right. But if there was no satisfactory declaration of the war aims regarding India, the moral support that Britain would gain would not be forthcoming. The result would be quite different, if the Congress were indifferent as to means. She would in that case foment a rebellion and offer effective obstruction.

"Now it would be mental violence and not physical violence?" the friend asked.

"Maybe," said Gandhiji. "But the non-co-operation that may come would be non-violent. Mental violence has no potency and injures only the person whose thoughts are violent. It is otherwise with mental non-violence. It has potency which the world does not yet know. And what I want is non-violence of the thought and deed.

"Such non-violent support can be available to Britain only if her cause is demonstrably just, even though from a pacifist standpoint her means are violent and therefore bad. Her cause

will not be just if she is not just to India, i.e., if of her own accord and without reference to the parties in India she does not wash her hands clean of the imperialist exploitation of India. Therefore, non-violent India's prayer will be for Britain's victory when she declares in unequivocal terms that India is a free nation in action now, and in law as soon as possible, may be even during the war. This she will do from the heart only when she begins to rely more on the efficacy of the moral support of non-violent India than on her own strong arm. If England can take this step, the war will end in peace through moral force, rather than through superiority of arms."

Sevagram, 15-1-40 M. D.
Harijan, 20-1-1940

100

UNIVERSAL CONSCRIPTION

Q. You say millions are unarmed and unused to wielding arms. But what is the difficulty, when India is free, in training the whole nation in the use of arms by means of universal conscription ?

A. Of course in theory there is nothing to prevent the training by universal conscription. Only I think that the people of this land would not take to arms easily even though conscription may be resorted to. In any event arming of the millions, or even a few, is outside my province. It is repugnant to me. But what I would conscript is productive labour, skilled and unskilled. This, I hold would be the easiest and the most effective method of organizing society on a peaceful footing.

Sevagram, 28-1-40
Harijan, 3-2-1940

101

THE QUESTION OF DEFENCE

So far as defence is concerned, surely it will be the primary concern of free India to make her own arrangements. It may well be that India would want elaborate preparation and would want Britain's help, if it is given, in enabling her to do so. Thanks to imperial policy, unarmed India is left wholly unprotected except by the British bayonet and Indian soldiers whom British power has brought into being. It is a position humiliating alike for Britain and for India. I am personally unconcerned because, if I could carry India with me, I would want nothing beyond a police force for protection against dacoits and the like. But so far as defence is concerned unarmed peaceful India would rely upon the goodwill of the whole world. But I know that that is only a dream at the present moment.*

Harijan, 10-2-1940

102

MORE CALUMNY

Q. You did not hesitate to join the Ali Brothers in their intrigue to invite Amanulla Khan to invade India and set up Muslim Raj. You drafted a wire for Maulana Mahomed Ali advising the then Amir not to enter into a treaty with the British. The late Swami Shraddhanandji is reported to have seen the draft. And now you want the Hindus of Sindh to make a present of their hearths and homes to their Mussalman oppressors instead of demanding the re-amalgamation of Sindh with the Bombay province, which alone can restore the reign of law to Sindh. Why won't you realize that in this age of enlightenment and progress what the minorities expect is effective protection of their due rights, not mere pious counsels of perfection ?

* From a press interview given at Delhi on 6-2-'40.

A. I have several such letters. Hitherto I have ignored them. But now I see that the news has gone through a revised and enlarged edition in the Hindu Mahasabha. An angry correspondent threatens that persons like him will begin to believe what has been stated so authoritatively. For the sake of my reputation, therefore, I must answer the question. But my correspondents should know that life for me would be a burden, if I were to make it a point of controverting every false report about me or distortion of my writing. A reputation that requires such a mud wall of protection is not worth keeping. So far as the charge of my intriguing with the Amir is concerned I can say that there is no truth whatsoever in it. Further, I know that the Brothers stoutly denied the charge when it was brought to their notice. And I believed them implicitly. I do not remember having drafted any telegram on behalf of Maulana Mahomed Ali to the then Amir. The alleged telegram is harmless in itself and does not warrant the deduction drawn from it. The late Swamiji never referred the matter to me for confirmation. It is wrong to say anything against dead men unless one has positive proof and stating it is relevant. The romance has been woven round my writings in *Young India*.* Deductions drawn from them are wholly unjustified. I would not be guilty of inviting any power to invade India for the purpose of expelling the English. For one thing, it would be contrary to my creed of non-violence. For another, I have too great a respect for English bravery and arms to think that an invasion of India can be successful without a strong combination of different powers. In any case, I have no desire to substitute British rule with any other foreign rule. I want unadulterated Home Rule, however inferior in quality it may be. My position remains today what it was when I wrote the *Young India* paragraphs now sought to be used against me. Let me further remind the readers that I do not believe in secret methods.

As for Sindh my advice stands. Re-incorporation of Sindh in the Bombay province may or may not be a good proposition on other grounds, but certainly it is not for the purpose of greater protection of life and property. Every Indian, be he Hindu or any other, must learn the art of protecting himself. It is the condi-

* Chapters 3 to 6 (pp. 6-14) in this book.

tion of real democracy. The State has a duty. But no State can protect those who will not share with it the duty of protecting themselves.

On the way to Delhi, 4-2-40
Harijan, 10-2-1940

103

MY ADVICE TO NOAKHALI HINDUS

Manoranjan Babu and other friends from Noakhali came to see me during my stay in Malikanda about the difficulties of the Hindus in their locality. Manoranjan Babu has been in correspondence with me in the matter for some time. I have not examined the grievances. I had neither the time nor the wish to do so. That is the special province of the Provincial Congress Committee and finally the central body. But I had no difficulty in giving general advice. Their case is more or less like the Sukkur case. There is a great difference in degree. But I feel sure that no popularly elected government can successfully cope with wide-spread *goondaism* as it is alleged to be in Noakhali. It is essentially a case of self-defence. Self-respect and honour cannot be protected by others. They are for each individual himself or herself to guard. Governments can at best punish offenders after the offence has been committed. They cannot assure prevention except in so far as punishment acts as a deterrent. Self-defence can be violent or non-violent. I have always advised and insisted on non-violent defence. But I recognize that it has to be learnt like violent defence. It requires a different training from that which is required for violent defence. Therefore, if the capacity for non-violent self-defence is lacking, there need be no hesitation in using violent means. But Manoranjan Babu, being an old congressman, said, "You say I cannot retaliate even in self-defence?" "That is certainly my view," I replied. "There was, however, a resolution passed by the Gaya Congress that the use of force in self-defence was permissible to congressmen. I have never justified the resolution. Non-violence becomes meaningless, if violence is permitted for self-defence. What is it but self-defence in national resistance

against an aggressor nation? I would, therefore, advise secession from the Congress, if you contemplate the use of force in defending yourselves in the circumstances described by you."

"But," said Manoranjan Babu, "supposing I adopt the Gaya resolution, would I be accused of communalism, if I defended the aggrieved Hindus?" "Certainly not," I replied. "In the first place, you do not cease to be Hindu because you are a congressman. You will, however, be guilty of communalism, if you sided with Hindus right or wrong. In the case in point you will defend Hindus, not because they are Hindus but because they are afflicted. I would expect you to defend Muslims if you found them molested by Hindus. A congressman recognizes or should recognize no communal distinction."

The interviewers then discussed the Congress dissensions, and told me that many Hindus despairing of Congress aid had joined the Hindu Mahasabha, and asked whether they could do likewise. I told them that in theory I could see no objection. Whether the local circumstances justified the step or not I could not judge. But if I was a congressman and found that as such I could not act effectively, I should not hesitate to join an organization which could render effective assistance. I added, however, that no responsible congressman could hold office in a Congress organization and yet be a member of the Hindu Mahasabha which is frankly a communal organization. The whole question bristles with difficulties. The occasion demands calmness, truthfulness and boldness. Communalism is bound to win, if the Congress cannot become effectively non-violent. It will itself become communal in action, if it plays with non-violence. For the majority of congressmen who are Hindus are bound to drift into violence, if they do not know the effective use of non-violence. I am quite clear in my mind that the Congress can remain non-communal only if it becomes truly non-violent in all matters. It cannot be non-violent only towards the rulers and violent towards others. That way lie disgrace and disaster.

Calcutta, 26-2-40
Harijan, 2-3-1940

104

WHEN THE BRITISH WITHDRAW

> "Unless you adopt an all-party form of government, you are paving the way towards sowing Hindu-Muslim conflict after the British protection is withdrawn. It was not non-violence but your tremendous magnetism plus the backing of British bayonet that kept the Congress in power. Try non-violence without the latter for two or three months, and the truth of the above will be realized."

Thus writes an esteemed correspondent. I have no difficulty in endorsing the remark that it was the British bayonet that kept the Congress ministries in power. My 'magnetism' may have had something to do with the victory at the polls. But it proved utterly useless to keep the ministries in power. The sustaining force was the British bayonet. This only shows that the people at large have not yet imbibed the lesson of non-violence.

The remedy is not an all-party government. Such will be no government of the people for the people. It will be the government of a caucus for its own ends. The caucus will have no smoother sailing than the Congress ministries had. It will also have to rely upon the British bayonet. There can be no manly peace in the land unless the British bayonet is withdrawn. The risk of riots has to be run. Non-violence will be born out of such risks, if at all it is to be part of national life. It is daily becoming crystal clear that real unity will not come so long as the British bayonet crushes the free spirit of the people. The peace it imposes is the peace of the grave. I feel that riots will be a welcome relief, if that is the price we have to pay for freedom. For out of them I can conceive the possibility of peace coming, not out of the present unreality. The way out of riots on the one hand and British bayonets on the other is frank acceptance of non-violence. To this my life is dedicated, and my faith in its possibility and efficacy will survive the dissolution of my body.

On the train to Wardha, 3-3-40
Harijan, 9-3-1940

105

SOME QUESTIONS

"May I ask one or two more important questions before leaving?" said Chinese friend. "Do you expect to see India independent?"

"Yes, of course," came the reply in no uncertain terms. "I *want* to see India free in my lifetime. But God may not consider me fit enough to see the dream of life fulfilled. Then I shall quarrel, not with Him but with myself."

"But without an army how can you ever succeed?"

"Well, we have done so thus far. We are nearing our goal without having fired a single shot. It will be a miracle, if we succeed. But there is nothing to make me doubt the efficacy of the weapon of non-violence. Whether, however, we have the requisite degree of it within us has yet to be proved."

"Is there hatred against the British?"

"Yes — alas — but if we remain non-violent, hatred will die as everything does from disuse."

"It is very hard for us to get rid of hatred against Japan."

"Yes, it will take generations for you as you are using violence against them. I do not say that you should not have defended yourselves violently, but under those circumstances hatred cannot die."

"Are the British easier to deal with than any other people?"

"They are as easy, in terms of non-violence, to deal with as anyone else. But not having dealt with anyone else I cannot say from practical experience. All conquerors of India have reacted to what is noble in Indian culture and in Indian nature, the Muslims included. I believe the Germans would have done likewise. It may even be that the English reaction has been less than what others' may have been because of their insularity and colour prejudice."

A. K.

Sevagram, 7-4-40
Harijan, 13-4-1940

106

TWO QUESTIONS FROM AMERICA

A friend writing from America propounds the following two questions:

> "1. Granted that *satyagraha* is capable of winning India's independence, what are the chances of its being accepted as a principle of State policy in a free India? In other words, would a strong and independent India rely on *satyagraha* as a method of self-preservation, or would it lapse back to seeking refuge in the age-old institution of war, however defensive its character? To restate the question on the basis of a purely theoretic problem: Is *satyagraha* likely to be accepted only in an uphill battle, when the phenomenon of martyrdom is fully effective, or is it also to be the instrument of a sovereign authority which has neither the need nor the scope of behaving on the principle of martyrdom?
>
> 2. Suppose a free India adopts *satyagraha* as an instrument of State policy, how would she defend herself against probable aggression by another sovereign State? To restate the question on the basis of a purely theoretic problem: What would be the *satyagrahic* action-patterns to meet the invading army at the frontier? What kind of resistance can be offered the opponent before a common area of action, such as the one now existing in India between the Indian nationalists and the British government, is established? Or should the *satyagrahis* withhold their action until after the opponent has taken over the country?"

The questions are admittedly theoretical. They are also premature for the reason that I have not mastered the whole technique of non-violence. The experiment is still in the making. It is not even in its advanced stage. The nature of the experiment requires one to be satisfied with one step at a time. The distant scene is not for him to see. Therefore my answers can only be speculative.

In truth, as I have said before, now we are not having unadulterated non-violence even in our struggle to win independence.

As to the first question, I fear that the chances of non-violence being accepted as a principle of State policy are very

slight, so far as I can see at present. If India does not accept non-violence as her policy after winning independence, the second question becomes superfluous.

But I may state my own individual view of the potency of non-violence. I believe that a State can be administered on a non-violent basis, if the vast majority of the people are non-violent. So far as I know, India is the only country which has a possibility of being such a State. I am conducting my experiment in that faith. Supposing, therefore, that India attained independence through pure non-violence, India could retain it too by the same means. A non-violent man or society does not anticipate or provide for attacks from without. On the contrary, such a person or society firmly believes that nobody is going to disturb them. If the worst happens, there are two ways open to non-violence. To yield possession, but non-co-operate with the aggressor. Thus supposing that a modern edition of Nero descended upon India, the representatives of the State, will let him in, but tell him that he will get no assistance from the people. They will prefer death to submission. The second way would be non-violent resistance by the people who have been trained in the non-violent way. They would offer themselves unarmed as fodder for the aggressor's cannons. The underlying belief in either case is that even a Nero is not devoid of a heart. The unexpected spectacle of endless rows upon rows of men and women simply dying rather than surrender to the will of an aggressor must ultimately melt him and his soldiery. Practically speaking there will be probably no greater loss in men than if forcible resistance was offered; there will be no expenditure in armaments and fortifications. The non-violent training received by the people will add inconceivably to their moral height. Such men and women will have shown personal bravery of a type far superior to that shown in armed warfare. In each case the bravery consists in dying, not in killing. Lastly, there is no such thing as defeat in non-violent resistance. That such a thing has not happened before is no answer to my speculation. I have drawn no impossible picture. History is replete with instances of individual non-violence of the type I have mentioned. There is no warrant for saying or thinking that a group of men and women cannot by sufficient training act non-violently as a group

or nation. Indeed the sum total of the experience of mankind is that men somehow or other live on — from which fact I infer that it is the law of love that rules mankind. Had violence, i.e. hate, ruled us, we should have become extinct long ago. And yet the tragedy of it is that the so-called civilized men and nations conduct themselves as if the basis of society was violence. It gives me ineffable joy to make experiments proving that love is the supreme and only law of life. Much evidence to the contrary cannot shake my faith. Even the mixed non-violence of India has supported it. But if it is not enough to convince an unbeliever, it is enough to incline a friendly critic to view it with favour.

Sevagram, 8-4-40
Harijan, 13-4-1940

107

OF WHAT AVAIL IS NON-VIOLENCE?

An Indian friend writes:

> "Yesterday Reuter in pathetic terms related how the population of Norway under the rain of bombs and machine gun bullets was fleeting from towns completely demoralized and in panic. It is shocking that such good people should so suddenly be reduced to this helpless condition simply because they had neither the will nor the resources to develop the technique of destruction into a fine art. The futility of violence, and also, I fear, its temporary efficacy, is being proved. Of what avail was the violent defence of Norway? And yet for the time being the bigger violence of Germany seems to have succeeded! Let us hope eventually everyone will see the futility of violence and a new era may dawn. But are we really making a non-violent contribution towards the world problem? Of what avail is our non-violence to Norway, Sweden and Denmark? Virtually, are we not giving a handle to Germany? True, we are doing nothing beyond embarrassing Great Britain, and perhaps we may say that such an embarrassment is inevitable and is not caused deliberately. But the fact remains that England is in distress, and by our action we are embarrassing not only England but all other good nations who have been victims of aggression. We are not likely, it seems, to succeed in changing England's heart. And victims like Norway etc. can never appreciate our attitude. In the light of our

present attitude, the international world can with justification misinterpret our past help to victims of aggression like China and Spain. Were they more deserving of our help than the present victims? And if not, then why this distinction? Simply because an imperialist power, even for the sake of its own interest, happens to decide to do something which is noble and moral! You have never regretted your action during the last war when you vigorously recruited people for military purposes. This time your attitude appears to be in sharp contrast, although you say that both attitudes are right."

My correspondent is not alone in bemoaning the lot of most cultured and inoffensive people like the Danes and the Norwegians. This war is showing the futility of violence. Supposing Hitler becomes victorious over the Allies, he will never subjugate England and France. It will mean another war. Supposing the Allies are victorious, the world will fare no better. They will be more polite but not less ruthless, unless they learn the lesson of non-violence during the war and unless they shed the gains they have made through violence. The first condition of non-violence is justice all round in every department of life. Perhaps it is too much to expect of human nature. I do not, however, think so. No one should dogmatize about the capacity of human nature for degradation or exaltation.

Indian non-violence has brought no relief to the cultured Western powers because it is still poor stuff. Why travel so far to see its inefficacy? We in India are torn asunder in spite of the Congress policy of non-violence. The Congress itself is distrusted. Not until the Congress or a similar group of people represents the non-violence of the strong, will the world catch the infection.

India's aid to Spain and China was merely moral. The material aid was but an insignificant token of it. There is hardly an Indian who does not feel the same sympathy for Norway and Denmark who lost their freedom overnight. Though their case is different from that of Spain and China, their ruin is more complete perhaps than that of Spain and China. Indeed there is a material difference even between China and Spain. But there is no difference so far as sympathy is concerned. Pauper India has nothing to send to these countries except her non-violence. But, as I have said, this is not yet a sendable commodity. It will be, when India has gained her freedom through non-violence.

There then remains Britain's case. The Congress has caused no embarrassment. I have declared already that I shall do nothing to embarrass Great Britain. She will be embarrassed, if there is anarchy in India. That the Congress, so long as it is under my discipline, will not support.

What the Congress cannot do is to lend its moral influence to Britain. Moral influence is never mechanically given. It is for Britain to take it. Perhaps British statesmen do not think the Congress has any to lend. Perhaps they think that all they need is material aid in this warring world. If they do, they will not be far wrong. Morality is contraband in war. My correspondent has given up the whole of his case for Britain when he says, "We are not likely to succeed in changing Britain's heart." I do not wish ill to Britain. I shall grieve if Britain goes down. But the moral influence of the Congress cannot avail Britain unless she washes her hands clean of India. It works under its own unalterable condition.

My friend does not see the difference between my recruiting in Kheda and my attitude now. During the last war the moral issue had not been raised. The Congress was not pledged to non-violence. It had not the moral hold on the masses it now enjoys. I was acting on my own in all I did. I had even attended the War Conference. And to be true to my declaration I had been recruiting at the cost of my health. I told the people that, if they wanted arms, military service was the surest way to get them. But if they were non-violent like me, my appeal was not to them. There was no non-violent man among my audiences so far as I know. Their reluctance was based on ill-will towards Britain. This was gradually giving place to an enlightened determination to throw off the foreign yoke.

Things have changed since then. In spite of the unanimous support that Britain got during the last war from India, the British attitude was translated into the Rowlatt Act and the like. The Congress accepted non-violent non-co-operation to meet the British menace. There is the memory of the Jallianwala Bagh, the Simon Commission, the Round Table Conferences, the emasculation of Bengal for the sake of the misdeeds of a few. The Congress having accepted non-violence, I do not need to go to the people to give recruits. Through the Congress I can give

something infinitely better than a few such recruits. Of that evidently Britain has no need. I am willing but helpless.

Sevagram, 30-4-40
Harijan, 4-5-1940

108

DEMOCRACY AND NON-VIOLENCE

Q. Why do you say, "Democracy can only be saved through non-violence ?" (The questioner is an American friend.)

A. Because democracy, so long as it is sustained by violence cannot provide for or protect the weak. My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest. That can never happen except through non-violence. No country in the world today shows any but patronizing regard for the weak. The weakest, you say, go to the wall. Take your own case. Your land is owned by a few capitalist owners. The same is true of South Africa. These large holdings cannot be sustained except by violence, veiled if not open. Western democracy, as it functions today, is diluted Nazism or Fascism. At best it is merely a cloak to hide the Nazi and the Fascist tendencies of imperialism. Why is there the war today, if it is not for the satisfaction of the desire to share the spoils? It was not through democratic methods that Britain bagged India. What is the meaning of South African democracy? Its very constitution has been drawn to protect the White man against the coloured man, the natural occupant. Your own history is perhaps blacker still, in spite of what the Northern States did for the abolition of slavery. The way you have treated the Negro presents a discreditable record. And it is to save such democracies that the war is being fought. There is something very hypocritical about it. I am thinking just now in terms of non-violence and trying to expose violence in its nakedness.

India is trying to evolve true democracy, i.e. without violence. Our weapons are those of *satyagraha* expressed through the *charka*, the village industries, primary education through handicrafts, removal of untouchability, communal harmony,

prohibition, and non-violent organization of labour as in Ahmedabad. These mean mass effort and mass education. We have big agencies for conducting these activities. They are purely voluntary, and their only sanction is service of the lowliest.

This is the permanent part of the non-violent effort. From this effort is created the capacity to offer non-violent resistance called non-co-operation and civil disobedience which may culminate in mass refusal to pay rent and taxes. As you know, we have tried non-co-operation and civil disobedience on a fairly large scale and fairly successfully. The experiment has in it promise of a brilliant future. As yet our resistance has been that of the weak. The aim is to develop the resistance of the strong. Your wars will never ensure safety for democracy. India's experiment can and will, if the people come up to the mark or, to put it another way, if God gives me the necessary wisdom and strength to bring the experiment to fruition.

Sevagram, 13-5-40
Harijan, 18-5-1940

109

PANIC

Nowadays one reads about panic in the Press and hears more than one reads. One friend writes, "You sitting in lonely Sevagram can have no notion of the talks and whispers going on in the busy cities. Panic has seized them."

Panic is the most demoralizing state anyone can be in. There never is any cause for panic. One must keep heart whatever happens. War is an unmitigated evil. But it certainly does one good thing, it drives away fear and brings bravery to the surface. Several million lives must have been already lost between the Allies and the Germans. They have been wasting blood like water. Old men, women both old and young, and children in Britain and France are living in the midst of imminent death. But there is no panic there. If they were seized by panic, it would be an enemy more dreadful than German bullets, bombs and poison gas. Let us learn from these suffering nations of the

West and banish panic from our midst. And in India there is no cause whatsoever for panic. Britain will die hard and heroically even if she has to. We may hear of reverses, but we will not hear of demoralization. Whatever happens will happen in an orderly manner.

Therefore I would say to those who lend a listening ear to me: "Go on with your work or business in the usual way. Do not withdraw your deposits or make haste to turn your paper into cash. If you are cautious, you will run no new risks. Your metal buried underground or in your treasure chests need not be considered safer than in banks or in paper, if anarchy overtakes us. There is risk just now in everything. It is best to be as you are in such a condition. Your steadiness, if it multiplied, will steady the market. It will be the best preventive against anarchy. There is undoubtedly fear of *goondaism* in such times. You must be prepared to cope with it yourself. *Goondas* flourish only in the midst of timid people. They will have no quarter from people who can defend themselves violently or non-violently. Non-violent defence presupposes recklessness about one's life and property. If it is persisted in, it will in the end be a sure cure for *goondaism*. But non-violence cannot be learnt in a day. It requires practice. You can commence to learn it from now. You must be ready to lose your life or property or both. But that is implied in the art of non-violence. If you do not know how to defend yourself either way, the government will not be able to save you in spite of its best effort. No government, however powerful it may be, can without the active co-operation of the people. If even God only helps those who will help themselves, how much more true it must be of perishable governments! Do not lose nerve and think that tomorrow there will be no government and it will be all anarchy. You can be the government now, and you certainly will be in the contingency you contemplate or you will perish."

Sevagram, 4-6-40
Harijan, 8-6-1940

110
HOW TO COMBAT HITLERISM

Whatever Hitler may ultimately prove to be, we know what Hitlerism has come to mean. It means naked ruthless force reduced to an exact science and worked with scientific precision. In its effect it becomes almost irresistible.

In the early days of *satyagraha* when it was still known as passive resistance, *The Star* of Johannesburg, stirred by the sight of a handful of Indians, wholly unarmed and incapable of organized violence even if they wished it, pitting themselves against an overwhelmingly armed government, had a cartoon in which the latter was depicted as a steam-roller representing irresistible force, and passive resistance was depicted as an elephant unmoved and comfortably planting himself in his seat. This was marked immovable force. The cartoonist had a true insight into the duel between the irresistible and the immovable forces. It was then a stalmate. The sequel we know. What was depicted and appeared to be irresistible was successfully resisted by the immovable force of *satyagraha* — call it suffering without retaliation.

What became true then can be equally true now. Hitlerism will never be defeated by counter-Hitlerism. It can only breed superior Hitlerism raised to *n*th degree. What is going on before our eyes is a demonstration of the futility of violence as also of Hitlerism.

Let me explain what I mean by failure of Hitlerism. It has robbed the small nations of their liberty. It has compelled France to sue for peace. Probably by the time this is in print Britain will have decided upon her course. The fall of France is enough for my argument. I think French statesmen have shown rare courage in bowing to the inevitable and refusing to be party to senseless mutual slaughter. There can be no sense in France coming out victorious if the stake is in truth lost. The cause of liberty becomes a mockery, if the price to be paid is wholesale destruction of those who are to enjoy liberty. It then becomes an inglorious satiation of ambition. The bravery

of the French soldier is world-known. But let the world know also the greater bravery of the French statesmen in suing for peace. I have assumed that the French statesmen have taken the step in a perfectly honourable manner as behoves true soldiers. Let me hope that Herr Hitler will impose no humiliating terms but show that, though he can fight without mercy, he can at least conclude peace not without mercy.

But to resume the thread of the argument. What will Hitler do with his victory? Can he digest so much power? Personally he will go as empty-handed as his not very remote predecessor Alexander. For the Germans he will have left not the pleasure of owning a mighty empire but the burden of sustaining its crushing weight. For they will not be able to hold all the conquered nations in perpetual subjection. And I doubt if the Germans of future generations will entertain unadulterated pride in the deeds for which Hitlerism will be deemed responsible. They will honour Herr Hitler as a genius, as a brave man, a matchless organizer, and much more. But I should hope that the Germans of the future will have learnt the art of discrimination even about their heroes. Anyway I think it will be allowed that all the blood that has been spilled by Hitler has added not a millionth part of an inch to the world's moral stature.

As against this imagine the state of Europe today if the Czechs, the Poles, the Norwegians, the French and the English had all said to Hitler: "You need not make your scientific preparation for destruction. We will meet your violence with non-violence. You will, therefore, be able to destroy our non-violent army without tanks, battleships and airships." It may be retorted that the only difference would be that Hitler would have got without fighting what he has gained after a bloody fight. Exactly. The history of Europe would then have been written differently. Possession might (but only might) have been then taken under non-violent resistance, as it has been taken now after perpetration of untold barbarities. Under non-violence only those would have been killed who had trained themselves to be killed, if need be, but without killing anyone and without bearing malice towards anybody. I dare say that in that case Europe would have added several inches to its moral

stature. And in the end I expect it is the moral worth that will count. All else is dross.

I have written these lines for the European Powers. But they are meant for ourselves. If my argument has gone home, is it not time for us to declare our changeless faith in non-violence of the strong and say we do not seek to defend our liberty with the force of arms, but we will defend it with the force of non-violence ?

Sevagram, 18-6-40
Harijan, 22-6-1940

111

BOTH HAPPY AND UNHAPPY

It was on the 18th instant that I expressed the following hope in *Harijan* :

> "If my argument has gone home, is it not time for us to declare our changeless faith in non-violence of the strong and say we do not seek to defend our liberty with the force of arms but we will defend it with the force of non-violence ?"

On the 21st the Working Committee felt unable to enforce such faith in action when the time for it came. For the Committee never before had an occasion to test their faith. At the last meeting they had to lay down a course of action for meeting impending anarchy within and danger of aggression from without.

I pleaded hard with the Committee : "If you have faith in non-violence of the strong, now is the time to act up to it. It does not matter that many parties do not believe in non-violence whether of the strong or of the weak. Probably that is all the greater reason for congressmen to meet the emergency by non-violent action. For if all were non-violent, there could be no anarchy and there would be no question of anybody arming for meeting aggression from without. It is because congressmen represent a party of non-violence, in the midst of parties who do not believe in it, that it becomes

imperative for congressmen to show that they are well able to act up to their faith."

But the members of the Working Committee felt that congressmen would not be able to act up to it. It would be a new experience for them. They were never before called upon to deal with such a crisis. The attempt made by me to form peace brigades to deal with communal riots and the like had wholly failed. Therefore they could not hope for the action contemplated.

My position was different. With the Congress non-violence was always a policy. It was open to it to reject it if it failed. If it could not bring political and economic independence, it was of no use. For me non-violence is a creed. I must act up to it whether I am alone or have companions. Since propaganda of non-violence is the mission of my life, I must pursue it in all weathers. I felt that now was the time for me to prove my faith before God and man. And so I asked for absolution from the Committee. Hitherto I have been responsible for guiding the general policy of the Congress. I could no longer do so when fundamental differences were discovered between them and me. They readily recognized the correctness of my attitude. And they gave me the absolution. Once more they have justified the trust imposed in them. They have been true to themselves. They had not the confidence in themselves or those whom they represented, that they could express in their actions the required measure of non-violence. And so they made the only choice they could honestly make. It was a tremendous sacrifice they made — the sacrifice of the prestige that the Congress had gained in the world for unadulterated non-violence, and the dissolution of the unwritten and unspoken bond between them and me. But though it is a break in the common practice of a common ideal or policy, there is no break in the friendship of over twenty years' standing.

I am both happy and unhappy over the result. Happy because I have been able to bear the strain of the break and have been given the strength to stand alone. Unhappy because my word seemed to lose the power to carry with me those whom it was my proud privilege to carry all these many years which seem like yesterday. But I know that, if God shows me the

way to demonstrate the efficacy of non-violence of the strong, the break will prove to have been temporary. If there is no way, they will have justified their wisdom in bearing the wrench of letting me go my way alone. If that tragic discovery of my impotence is in store for me, I hope still to retain the faith that has sustained me all these years and to have humility enough to realize that I was not fit enough instrument to carry the torch of non-violence any further.

But this argument and doubt are based upon the assumption that the members of the Working Committee represent the feeling of the vast majority of congressmen. They would wish, and I hope, that the vast majority of congressmen had in them the non-violence of the strong. No one would be more glad than they to discover that they had underrated congressmen's strength. The probability, however, is that there is no majority but only a good minority which represents the non-violence of the strong. It should be remembered that the matter does not lend itself to argument. The members of the Working Committee had all the argument before them. But non-violence, which is a quality of the heart, cannot come by an appeal to the brain. Therefore what is required is a quiet but resolute demonstration of non-violent strength. The opportunity comes to everyone almost daily. There are communal clashes, there are dacoities, there are wordy duels. In all these things those who are truly non-violent can and will demonstrate it. If it is shown in an adequate measure, it will not fail to infect their surroundings. I am quite clear that there is not a single congressman who disbelieves in the efficacy of non-violence out of sheer cussedness. Let the congressmen who believe that the Congress should adhere to non-violence in dealing with internal disorders or external aggression, express it in their daily conduct. Non-violence of the strong cannot be a mere policy. It must be a creed, or a passion, if 'creed' is objected to. A man with a passion expresses it in every little act of his. Therefore he who is possessed by non-violence will express it in the family circle, in his dealings with neighbours, in his business, in Congress meetings, in public meetings, and in his dealings with opponents. It is because it has not expressed itself in this way among congressmen that the members of the Working Com-

mittee rightly concluded that congressmen were not ready for non-violent treatment of internal disorders or external aggression. Embarrassment caused by non-violent action would move established authority to yield to popular will. But such action has obviously no play in the face of disorders. We have to court death without retaliation and with no malice or anger towards those who bring about disorder. It is easy enough to see that non-violence required here is of a wholly different type from what the Congress has known hitherto. But it is the only non-violence that is true and that can save the world from self-destruction. This is a certainty sooner or later, sooner rather than later, if India cannot deliver the message of true non-violence to a world which wants to be saved from the curse of wars and does not know how to find the deliverance.

Sevagram, 24-6-40

P.S. — After the foregoing was written and typed, I saw Pandit Jawaharlal's statement. His love for and confidence in me peep out of every sentence referring to me. The foregoing does not need any amendment. It is better for the reader to have both the independent reactions. Good must come out of this separation.

Harijan, 29-6-1940

112

WHAT TO DO ?

Q. The situation in the country is becoming graver daily. Everywhere panic is growing. In certain parts armed gangs are already organizing themselves to take advantage of the ensuing anarchy in case the central power should disintegrate or weaken. The danger may not be imminent, but it would be folly to ignore its possibility. With all the education in non-violence which the country has received during the last twenty years, you will agree that it has not developed the sort of non-violence that can be effective in the face of anarchy and gangsterism. The government is taking steps to organize the citizens for self-defence. What is the duty of those who look up to you for lead and guidance ? Should they take part in these government activities ? If they should not, what else are they to do ? Surely they cannot sit with folded hands doing nothing.

A. I am unable to say what the Congress will exactly do, in view of the recent statement of the Working Committee. If you believe in non-violent treatment of anarchy and the like, naturally you will prepare yourself and your neighbours and those whom you can influence for non-violent defence. I quite agree with you that no responsible person can sit idly by in these times. Violent preparation would need long previous training. Non-violent preparation means mental adjustment. Possibility of anarchy there undoubtedly is. But if you are non-violent, you will not give way to fear. Do not anticipate anarchy just as you do not anticipate death though you know that it is a certainty. If you are non-violent, you will believe that there will be no anarchy. But if unfortunately it comes, you and your companions or followers will give your lives to prevent it. Those who give their lives in trying to kill those whom they regard as robbers or mischief-makers, do no better, possibly they do worse. They risk their lives, and there is darkness after they are gone. What is more, they may leave things worse by feeding the fire of violence by counter-violence. Those who die unresistingly are likely to still the fury of violence by their

wholly innocent sacrifice. But this truly non-violent action is not possible unless it springs from a heart belief that he whom you fear and regard as a robber, dacoit, or worse, and you are one, and that therefore, it is better that you die at his hands than that he, your ignorant brother, should die at yours.

Sevagram, 24-6-40
Harijan, 29-6-1940

113

A VITAL QUESTION

The next question for consideration is that of providing for internal disorder and external invasion. The raising of private armies will be worse than useless. It will never be allowed. No power, whether foreign or Swadeshi, can tolerate private armies. Those, therefore, who believe in the necessity of India having armed forces will be driven sooner or later to enlist themselves under the British banner. It is the logical outcome of the belief. The Working Committee have taken the decision on the point. If it is to abide, I have little doubt that they will presently have to advise congressmen to enlist in the usual way. That would mean an end to the slogan of immediate independence and an end also to non-violence of the true brand. I shall hope to the last that, for the sake of themselves, India, aye Britain herself, and humanity, congressmen will resolutely decline to have anything to do with the use of arms for any of the two purposes. I feel strongly that the future of humanity lies in the hands of the Congress. May God give wisdom and courage to congressmen to take the right step.*

New Delhi, 1-7-40
Harijan, 6-7-1940

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* From an article entitled 'Some Vital Questions'.

114

TO EVERY BRITON

In 1896 I addressed an appeal to every Briton in South Africa on behalf of my countrymen who had gone there as labourers or traders and their assistants. It had its effect. However important it was from my viewpoint, the cause which I pleaded then was insignificant compared with the cause which prompts this appeal. I appeal to every Briton, wherever he may be now, to accept the method of non-violence instead of that of war, for the adjustment of relations between nations and other matters. Your statesmen have declared that this is a war on behalf of democracy. There are many other reasons given in justification. You know them all by heart. I suggest that, at the end of the war, whichever way it ends, there will be no democracy left to represent democracy. This war has descended upon mankind as a curse and a warning. It is a curse inasmuch as it is brutalizing man on a scale hitherto unknown. All distinctions between combatants and non-combatants have been abolished. No one and nothing is to be spared. Lying has been reduced to an art. Britain was to defend small nationalities. One by one they have vanished, at least for the time being. It is also a warning. It is a warning that, if nobody reads the writing on the wall, man will be reduced to the state of the beast, whom he is shaming by his manners. I read the writing when the hostilities broke out. But I had not the courage to say the word. God has given me the courage to say it before it is too late.

I appeal for cessation of hostilities, not because you are too exhausted to fight, but because war is bad in essence. You want to kill Nazism. You will never kill it by its indifferent adoption. Your soldiers are doing the same work of destruction as the Germans. The only difference is that perhaps yours are not as thorough as the Germans. If that be so, yours will soon acquire the same thoroughness as theirs, if not much greater. On no other condition can you win the war. In other words, you will have to be more ruthless than the Nazis. No cause,

however just, can warrant the indiscriminate slaughter that is going on minute by minute. I suggest that a cause that demands the inhumanities that are being perpetrated today cannot be called just.

I do not want Britain to be defeated, nor do I want her to be victorious in a trial of brute strength, whether expressed through the muscle or the brain. Your muscular bravery is an established fact. Need you demonstrate that your brain is also as unrivalled in destructive power as your muscle ? I hope you do not wish to enter into such an undignified competition with the Nazis. I venture to present you with a nobler and a braver way, worthy of the bravest soldier. I want you to fight Nazism without arms, or, if I am to retain the military terminology, with non-violent arms. I would like you to lay down the arms you have as being useless for saving you or humanity. You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want of the countries you call your possessions. Let them take possession of your beautiful island, with your many beautiful buildings. You will give all these but neither your souls, nor your minds. If these gentlemen choose to occupy your homes, you will vacate them. If they do not give you free passage out, you will allow yourselves man, woman and child, to be slaughtered, but you will refuse to owe allegiance to them.

This process or method, which I have called non-violent non-co-operation, is not without considerable success in its use in India. Your representatives in India may deny my claim. If they do, I shall feel sorry for them. They may tell you that our non-co-operation was not wholly non-violent, that it was born of hatred. If they give that testimony, I will not deny it. Had it been wholly non-violent, if all the non-co-operators had been filled with goodwill towards you, I make bold to say that you who are India's masters would have become her pupils and, with much greater skill than we have, perfected this matchless weapon and met the German and Italian friends' menace with it. Indeed the history of Europe during the past few months would then have been written differently. Europe would have been spared seas of innocent blood, the rape of so many small nations, and the orgy of hatred.

This is no appeal made by a man who does not know his business. I have been practising with scientific precision non-

violence and its possibilities for an unbroken period of over fifty years. I have applied it in every walk of life, domestic, institutional, economic and political. I know of no single case in which it has failed. Where it has seemed sometimes to have failed, I have ascribed it to my imperfections. I claim no perfection for myself. But I do claim to be a passionate seeker after Truth, which is but another name for God. In the course of that search the discovery of non-violence came to me. Its spread is my life mission. I have no interest in living except for the prosecution of that mission.

I claim to have been a lifelong and wholly disinterested friend of the British people. At one time I used to be also a lover of your empire. I thought that it was doing good to India. When I saw that in the nature of things it could do no good, I used, and am still using, the non-violent method to fight imperialism. Whatever the ultimate fate of my country, my love for you remains, and will remain, undiminished. My non-violence demands universal love, and you are not a small part of it. It is that love which has prompted my appeal to you.

May God give power to every word of mine. In His name I began to write this, and in His name I close it. May your statesmen have the wisdom and courage to respond to my appeal. I am telling His Excellency the Viceroy that my services are at the disposal of His Majesty's Government, should they consider them of any practical use in advancing the object of my appeal.

New Delhi, 2-7-40
Harijan, 6-7-1940

115

"A CRY IN THE WILDERNESS"?

उर्ध्वबाहुर्विरौम्येष न च कश्चिच्छृणोति मे।
धर्मादर्थश्च कामश्च स धर्मः किं न सेव्यते? ॥

"With hands upraised I cry:
(But none listens to me)
Dharma[1] yields both Artha[2] and Kama[3];
Why is that Dharma not observed?"

Bapuji Aney on his way back from Simla paid a flying visit to me at Delhi on Saturday. Whether we work together or seem to be working in opposite directions, his love for me endures, and so he never misses an opportunity to look in wherever I may be. He expresses himself freely before me, and often shares with me a verse or two from his inexhaustible store. During his Delhi visit he sympathized with me for my having had to sever my connection with the Congress, but he really congratulated me. "They should, I think, leave you in peace," he said, "and let you go your way. I read your appeal to every Briton. It will fall on deaf ears. But that does not matter to you. You cannot help telling them what you feel to be their *Dharma* (Duty). But it is not strange that they will not listen to you—seeing that the Congress itself did not listen to you at the critical moment. When even Sage Vyasa failed to make himself heard, how should others fare better? He had to conclude his great epic—Mahabharata—with a verse which reveals the cry of his soul." With this he cited the verse I have quoted at the head of this article. He thereby strengthened my faith, and also showed how difficult was the way I had chosen.

And yet it has never seemed to me so difficult as it is imagined to be. Though the Sardar's way and mine seem to diverge today, it does not mean that our hearts also diverge. It was in my power to stop him from seceding from me. But it did not seem to be proper to do so. And it would have been morally wrong to strive with Rajaji in what he firmly regarded

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1 Duty 2 Wealth 3 Desire, aspiration

as his clear duty. Instead, therefore, of dissuading Rajaji I encouraged him to follow his course. It was my clear duty to do so. If I have the power to carry my experiment of *ahimsa* to success in an apparently new field, if my faith endures, and if I am right in thinking that the masses are fundamentally non-violent, Rajaji and the Sardar will again be with me as before.

What are these apparently new fields for the operation of non-violence ? Those who have followed the Working Committee's resolutions and writings in *Harijan* are now familiar with these. Non-violence in its operation against constituted authority is one field. We have exercised this up to now with a fair amount of success, and I have always described it as the non-violence of the weak. This non-violence may be said to have come to stay with congressmen.

The other field is the exercise of *ahimsa* in internal disturbances — Hindu-Muslim riots and the like. We have not been able to show visible success in the exercise of *ahimsa* in this field. What then should the congressmen do when internal chaos is so imminent ? Will they return blow for blow, or will they cheerfully bend their heads to receive violent blows ? The answer to this is not so easy as we might think. Instead of going into the intricacies, I should say that congressmen should try to save the situation by laying down their lives, not by taking any. He who meets death without striking a blow fulfils his duty cent per cent. The result is in God's hands.

But it is clear that this non-violence is not the non-violence of the weak. It does not give one the joy of jail-going. One can have that joy and also cover thereby the ill-will one harbours in his breast against the government. One can also non-co-operate with the government. But where swords, knives, *lathis* and stones are freely used, what is a man to do single-handed ? Is it possible for one to receive these deadly blows with ill-will in one's heart ? It is clear that it is impossible to do so, unless one is saturated with charity. It is only he who feels one with his opponent that can receive his blows as though they were so many flowers. Even one such man, if God favours him, can do the work of a thousand. It requires soul force — moral courage — of the highest type.

The man or woman who can display this non-violence of the brave can easily stand against external invasion. This is

the third field for the exercise of non-violence. The Congress Working Committee were of opinion that, while it might be possible for us to exercise *ahimsa* in internal disturbances, India has not the strength to exercise *ahimsa* against the invasion of a foreign foe. This their want of faith has distressed me. I do not believe that the unarmed millions of India cannot exercise *ahimsa* with success in this wide field. It is for congressmen to reassure the Sardar, whose faith in *ahimsa* of the strong has for the moment been shaken, that *ahimsa* is the only weapon that can suit India in the fields mentioned. Let no one ask, "But what about the martial races in India?" For me that is all the more reason why congressmen should train themselves to defend their country with a non-violent army. This is an entirely new experiment. But who, save the Congress, is to try it — the Congress which has tried it successfully in one field? It is my unshakable faith that, if we have a sufficient number of non-violent soldiers, we are sure to succeed even in this new field, apart from the saving of the needless waste of crores of rupees.

I am therefore hoping that all Gujarati Congressites — men and women — will declare their adherence to *ahimsa* and reassure the Sardar that they will never resort to violence. Even if there is sure hope of success in the exercise of violence, they will not prefer it to the exercise of non-violence. We are sure to learn by our mistakes. "We fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake."

On the train to Wardha, 7-7-40
Harijan, 13-7-1940

116

THE DELHI RESOLUTION

I have just seen the news that the Working Committee's fateful resolution has been released to the Press. It was passed in my presence, but I wanted to say nothing before it was actually released for publication. It will be a profound mistake to suppose that the members passed the five solid days in wrangling. They had to discharge a heavy responsibility. Though logically the resolution is no departure from the Ramgarh resolution, it is an undoubted departure from its spirit. The letter often remains constant, the spirit changes. Up to now, for one reason or another, the Congress policy was : no participation in the war except for the moral influence that the Congress can exercise, if the vital demand was satisfied of Britain's own free will. Such was not the position of all the members of the Working Committee. Hence at the critical moment every member had to make up his or her mind independently of the rest. The five days were days of tremendous heart-searching. I had produced a draft resolution which almost all thought was the best, if they could bring to bear a living belief in non-violence through and through, or if they could truthfully say that such was the belief of their constituencies. Some had neither, and some had individually the required faith. Only Khan Saheb was clear so far as his own faith and that of his beloved Khudai Khidmatgars were concerned. So he had decided even after the last Wardha resolution that he had no place in the Congress. He had a special mission and a special duty to his followers. So the Working Committee gladly permitted him to retire from the Congress. By retiring he serves the Congress all the more, even as I hope to do. Who knows that those of us, who retire, may not be able to give our comrades the faith they seem, for the moment, to have lost ?

Rajaji was the framer of the resolution. He was as certain of his position as I was of mine. His persistency, courage and utter humility brought him converts. Sardar Patel was his greatest prize. He would not have even thought of bringing

up his resolution, if I had chosen to prevent him. But I give my comrades the same credit for earnestness and self-confidence that I claim for myself. I had long known that we were drifting away from each other in our outlook upon the political problems that face us. He will not allow me to say that his is a departure from *ahimsa*. He claims that his very *ahimsa* has led him to the point which culminated in his resolution. He thinks that I suffer from obsession owing to too much brooding on *ahimsa*. He almost thinks that my vision is blurred. It was no use my returning the compliment, though half joking I did. I have no proof, save my faith, to question his counter faith. That is evidently absurd. I could not carry the Committee with me at Wardha and so I got my absolution. I at once saw as clear as daylight that, if my position was not acceptable, Rajaji's was the only real alternative. I therefore encouraged him to persist in his effort, though all the while I held him to be hopelessly in the wrong. And by exemplary patience, skill and considerateness towards his opponents he got a good majority, five remaining neutral. I had a fearful moment. Generally such resolutions are not carried by the majority vote. But at this juncture unanimity was not to be expected. I advised that Rajaji's resolution should be enforced. And so at the last moment the Committee decided that the resolution should go forth to the world.

It was necessary for the public to have this background to the tremendous step the Committee have taken for good or ill. Those Congressmen who have a living faith in the non-violence of the strong will naturally abstain. For the moment, however, what they can do is wholly irrelevant. Rajaji's resolution represents the considered policy of the Congress. Non-congressmen, who were eager for the Congress to be free of my religious bias to adopt a purely political attitude, should welcome the resolution and support it wholeheartedly. So should the Muslim League, and even the Princes who think of India more than their principalities.

The British government have to make their choice. Independence they cannot withhold unless their wisdom is as much blurred as Rajaji claims that mine is. If independence is recognized, the acceptance of the other part of the resolution follows as a matter of course. The question is : do they want to impress

help from India by virtue of their rulership over India, or will they have help that a free and independent India can give? My individual advice has already gone. My help always has been promised. Acceptance of that advice can but enhance their heroism. But if they cannot accept it, I advise, as a disinterested but staunch friend, that the British government should not reject the hand of friendship offered by the Congress.

Sevagram, 8-7-40
Harijan, 13-7-1940

117

BEFORE THE GANDHI SEVA SANGH

If the Rank and File Believe

But if the Working Committee were wrong in their assumption that the rank and file have lost their belief in non-violence and that they cannot come up to the scratch in times of crisis, the rank and file have to reassure the Working Committee. That is what Gandhiji said, with special reference to the Gujaratis, in his article last week. He explained the whole thing at much greater length to the joint meeting of the Gandhi Seva Sangh and the Charkha Sangh held soon after the Wardha meeting of the Working Committee. "Now is the testing time for you," he said. "The Working Committee, let us say, were weighed and found wanting. Can the Gandhi Seva Sangh do anything to repair their failure? The Working Committee's resolution does not mean that you cannot appeal to people to declare their faith in non-violence. You can do so, and then tell the members of the Working Committee, 'You undervalued our faith. We are going to hold by the creed.' I tell you the Working Committee members will not only not resent this, but will simply dance with joy. Some of you are members of the Congress. It is the duty of those who are members and who believe in non-violence to reassure the members of the Working Committee, to declare their faith before the meeting of the A. I. C. C., and even before the open Congress, if the time comes.

But you may not separate your creed as congressmen and creed as ordinary human beings, your behaviour in Congress affairs and in non-Congress affairs. Your non-violence, if it is true, must be part of your normal life, must be in your thought, word and deed, and must colour all your behaviour. Then and then only can you give the Working Committee the assurance I have referred to, and compel them to alter their resolution."

The Test of Genuineness

"But," he added, "let me explain this further. You will examine every action of yours in the light of the creed. That does not mean that you will be morbid or pernickety. Your conduct will have to be natural. When I began observing silence it meant an effort on my part. Now it has become part of my nature, and to break my silence means an effort. In the same way acting non-violently must be part of your nature. It is likely that your relating everything to non-violence may be logically wrong, but it is not wrong for you. I may be wrong, in the eyes of others, in my belief that with every thread that I draw I am bringing Swaraj nearer, but for me the belief is as true as the fact that I exist. That saves me from losing my sanity. This spinning wheel is a symbol of non-violence for me. The wheel as such is lifeless, but when I invest it with symbolism it becomes a living thing for me. Its sound, if it is musical, is in tune with non-violence. If it is unmusical, it is not in tune with it, for it indicates carelessness on my part. The steel spindle one can use as a deadly weapon, but we have put it there for the best possible use. So we have to be meticulously careful about every part of the wheel. Then and then only will it produce fine music and spinning will be a true sacrificial act.

"But this kind of *sadhana*, you will say, may take thousands of years. It may take some a thousand years, and it may take some others only one year. Don't think that, if in spite of my 50 years' practice of it I am still imperfect, it must take you many more years. No, there is no rule of three here. You may succeed quicker than I. I meant what I said to Prithwisingh: 'You had at any rate the violence of the brave. I had nothing of it. Now if you believe in cultivating non-violence of the brave, you will do so much more quickly than I, and you will leave me behind.' This applies to every one of you. In South

Africa I was the first to learn shoemaking, and so I taught it to others. But those others soon left me behind. It was because I was a true teacher. Now if I am a true teacher of *ahimsa*, I am sure you will soon leave behind your teacher. If that does not happen, it will only mean that I was an unfit teacher. But if my teaching fructifies, there will be teachers of *ahimsa* in every home.

"I want to know how many of you are with me. If none goes with me, I am ready to tread my path alone. For I know that I can never be *alone* as God is there with me. You are all companion *sadhaks* (seekers) with me. I am old, but you have many years before you. And yet let me tell you that I do not feel the weight of my years. I do not think my power of growth or capacity for research has come to an end.

"So you have to go forth and find out how many actual believers in *ahimsa* there are among congressmen. The Working Committee members are your representatives. If they were mistaken in assessing the faith of their electors, you have to correct their judgment. My position was different from theirs. I consider myself a confirmed representative of *ahimsa* and so I severed my connection with the Congress in 1934. I could not help doing it. If I had not done so, I should have been untrue to my creed.

"No one knows my imperfections better than I, but what little power I possess is derived from my *ahimsa*. What is it but my *ahimsa* that draws thousands of women to me in fearless confidence? But neither you nor I can trade on our capital. We have to be up and doing every moment of our lives, and go forward in our *sadhana*. We have to live and move and have our being in *ahimsa* even as Hitler does in *himsa*. It is the faith and perseverance and single-mindedness with which he has perfected his weapons of destruction that commands my admiration. That he uses them as a monster is immaterial for our purpose. We have to bring to bear the same single-mindedness and perseverance in evolving our *ahimsa*. Hitler is awake all the 24 hours of the day in perfecting his *sadhana*. He wins because he pays the price. His inventions surprise his enemies. But it is his single-minded devotion to his purpose that should be the object of our admiration and emulation. Although he works all his waking hours, his intellect is unclouded and unerring. Are our intellects unclouded and unerring? A mere belief in *ahimsa*

or the charkha will not do. It should be intelligent and creative. If intellect plays a large part in the field of violence, I hold that it plays a larger part in the field of non-violence."

With this he referred to the work of Richard Gregg in this direction, and described how the latter had come to the conclusion that spinning as a symbol of non-violence is good enough not only for India but for the world.

Continuing he said: "The Working Committee's decision was simply an echo of the atmosphere around them. My decision could not be its echo. For *ahimsa* is my special *sadhana*, not that of the Congress. I congratulate the members on their honesty and their courage, though I am sorry for myself that I could not inspire them with confidence in our creed and in my leadership. We have now to show that we have faith in the non-violence of the brave. It does not mean the development of the capacity to go to jail. It means increasing faith in the potency of constructive work to bring about Swaraj, and in constructive work being a vital part of the programme of *ahimsa*."

Why an Imperfect Man Chosen?

To those who have been saying that, if Gandhiji has failed in perfecting his *ahimsa*, failure is certain in their case, he had already given the answer. But in the concluding part of the speech he presented another aspect of his imperfection. He said: "In placing civil disobedience before constructive work I was wrong, and I did not profit by the Himalayan blunder that I had committed. I feared that I should estrange my co-workers, and so carried on with imperfect *ahimsa*. But I am not sorry for my blunders. My imperfections and failures are as much a blessing from God as my successes and my talents, and I lay them both at His feet. Why should He have chosen me, an imperfect instrument, for such a mighty experiment? I think He deliberately did so. He had to serve the poor dumb ignorant millions. A perfect man might have been their despair. When they found that one with their failings was marching on towards *ahimsa*, they too had confidence in their own capacity. We should not have recognized a perfect man if he had come as our leader, and we might have driven him to a cave. Maybe he who follows me will be more perfect and you will be able to receive

his message. Maybe some one of you may be that perfect teacher who is to come."

An Impossible Ideal ?

But are we not being driven to philosophical anarchism ? Is that not an impossible ideal ? These questions were asked by a philosophic friend some months ago, and Gandhiji gave him replies which I think will be useful today.

"Does anyone know true non-violence ?" he asked.

Gandhiji immediately replied: "Nobody knows it, for nobody can practise perfect non-violence."

"Then how can it be used in politics ?"

"It can be used in politics precisely as it can be used in the domestic sphere. We may not be perfect in our use of it, but we definitely discard the use of violence, and grow from failure to success."

"You would govern non-violently. But all legislation is violence."

"No, not all legislation. Legislation imposed by people upon themselves is non-violence to the extent it is possible in society. A society organized and run on the basis of complete non-violence would be the purest anarchy."

"Do you think it is a realizable ideal ?"

"Yes. It is realizable to the extent non-violence is realizable. That State is perfect and non-violent where the people are governed the least. The nearest approach to purest anarchy would be a democracy based on non-violence. The European democracies are to my mind a negation of democracy."

"Do you think that non-violence of the democracy which you visualize was ever realized in the olden times ?"

"I do not know. But if it was not, it only means that we had never made the attempt to realize the highest in us. I have no doubt in my mind that at some stage we were wiser, and that we have to grow wiser than we are today in order to find what beauties are hidden in human nature. Perfect non-violence is impossible so long as we exist physically, for we would want some space at least to occupy. Perfect non-violence whilst you are inhabiting the body is only a theory like Euclid's point or straight line, but we have to endeavour every moment of our lives."

Sevagram, 15-7-40 M. D.

Harijan, 21-7-1940

118

THE CORRESPONDENCE

The following correspondence between Gandhiji and His Excellency the Viceroy is released for publication:

Gandhiji's letter to Lord Linlithgow dated Delhi, July 3:

"You must have seen in the Press my public appeal to every Briton. Nevertheless, for the sake of courtesy, I enclose herewith a copy. You will note the last sentence of my appeal. Will you please convey the contents of it to the proper quarters? The appeal and the offer at the end represent my personal and humble contribution to Britain's cause. It is the best I could give."

Lord Linlithgow's letter to Gandhiji dated Simla, July 10:

"I duly conveyed your letter of July 3 and your appeal to His Majesty's Government. I have now heard from them that with every appreciation of your motives they do not feel that the policy which you advocate is one which it is possible for them to consider, since in common with the whole empire they are firmly resolved to prosecute the war to a victorious conclusion."

Harijan, 21-7-1940

119

UNREPENTANT

By writing that 'Appeal to Every Briton' I have invited upon my head an extra load of work which without God's help I would be ill able to bear. If it is His will that I should shoulder it, He will give me the strength to carry on.

When I decided to confine myself mostly to writing in Gujarati or Hindustani, I had no notion that I would have to write the appeal. It came to me like a flash, and the courage to write it came with it. I had resisted till then all pressure from English and American friends to give guidance. But I could not see my way. Now having addressed that appeal, I must follow up the reactions to it. A large amount of correspondence is pouring in upon me. Save for one angry telegram, I had nothing but friendly criticism from Englishmen and even appreciation from some.

I was grateful to H. E. the Viceroy for forwarding my offer to His Majesty's Government. The correspondence with regard to it the readers have already seen or will see in this issue. Though no better response to the appeal was to be expected, I cannot help saying that it was the knowledge of the determination to carry the war to a victorious end that had prompted my appeal. No doubt the determination is natural and worthy of the best British tradition. Nevertheless the awful slaughter that the determination involves, should induce a search for a better and braver way to achieve the end. For peace has its victories more glorious than those of war. The non-violent method would have meant no abject surrender. It would have confounded all modern tactics of war, indeed rendered them of no use. The new world order, which all dream of, would surely have been found. I hold a new order to be impossible, if the war is fought to a finish or mutual exhaustion leads to a patched-up peace.

Let me, therefore, examine the argument advanced in a letter received from a friend. Here it is :

> "Two English friends, who admire you, say your appeal to every Briton cannot have any effect *just now*. It is impossible

> to expect the man in the street to do a complete *volte face* with any degree of understanding—indeed it is impossible for the understanding to do, as you say, without a *heart*-belief in non-violence. The time to mould a new world on your lines will be *after* the war. They realize your way is the right one, but they say it needs endless preparation and instruction and *big* leadership — none of which they possess. Regarding India they say the attitude of the present authority is deplorable. Long ago India should have been declared as independent as Canada, and her people should be allowed to work out their own constitution. But what they are extremely perplexed about now is that you want absolute Independence straightaway, and the next step you will take is 'no further help to Britain in the prosecution of war, surrender to Germany, and opposition to her by non-violent means.' You must explain what you mean in more detail so as to remove this misunderstanding. This is an honest reaction."

The appeal was intended to produce the effect now. It could not come out of the mathematical calculation. If the conviction could have come, action was an easy matter. The mass mind responds under pressure. That the appeal has not produced the intended result shows that either my word has no power or that God has a purpose of which we have no knowledge. The appeal has come from an anguished heart. I could not suppress it. It was not written for the moment. I am quite sure that it enunciates a truth of eternal value.

If the ground is not prepared from now, there may be no time left after a dismal termination of the war for evolving a new order. Whatever the order, it will be in response to a conscious or unconscious effort from now. Indeed the effort began before my appeal. I hope that it has stimulated it, perhaps given it a definite direction. I suggest to the non-official leaders and moulders of British opinion, if they are convinced of the truth of my position, to work for its adoption. Compared to the big issue raised in my appeal, the question of Indian independence pales into insignificance. But I hold with the two Englishmen that the British Government's attitude is deplorable. The two friends are wholly wrong in the deduction they have drawn from the assumed recognition of India's independence. They forget that I am out of the picture. Those who are responsible for the Working Committee's last resolution have meant

free India's co-operation with Britain. With them, there is no question of surrender to Germany or non-violent opposition.

But I must not here tarry on Indian independence and its implications, tempting though the subject is.

The cuttings and correspondence before me say that the Congress rejection of my advice to abstain from preparation for military defence of India precludes me from making the appeal to Britain or from expecting a favourable response. The argument is plausible, but only plausible. The critics say that, if I have failed with my people, I have no right to expect Britain whilst she is in the midst of a life and death struggle to listen to me. I am a man with a mission. India's millions have never tasted the bitters of war as the British have. Britain, if she is to fulfil her declared purpose, needs a radical change in her policy. I feel that I know the change that is needed. My inability to persuade the Working Committee is irrelevant to the theme under discussion. There is no analogy between India's case and Britain's. I am, therefore, wholly unrepentant. I maintain that in issuing my appeal I have acted wholly as a lifelong friend of Britain.

A writer, however, retorts : "Address your appeal to Hitler." In the first place, I did write to Herr Hitler. My letter was published in the Press some time after I addressed it. In the second place, there can be no meaning in my appeal to Herr Hitler to adopt non-violence. He is marching from victory to victory. I can only appeal to him to desist. That I have done. But to Britain, which is just now on the defensive, I can present the really effective weapon of non-violent non-co-operation. Let my method be rejected on merits, not by bringing inapt analogies or untenable argument. The issue raised by me, I venture to think, is of universal importance. The usefulness of non-violent method seems to be granted by all the critics. They gratuitously assume the impossibility of human nature, as it is constituted, responding to the strain involved in non-violent preparation. But that is begging the question. I say, "You have never tried the method on any scale. In so far as it has been tried, it has shown promising results."

Sevagram, 17-7-40
Harijan, 21-7-1940

120

KHANSAHEB'S AHIMSA

In the storm that shook most of the members of the Working Committee, Khansaheb Abdul Gaffar Khan stood firm as a rock. He had never any doubt about his position, and his statement, which I reproduce below, should serve as a beacon light to all of us:

> "Some recent resolutions of the Congress Working Committee indicate that they are restricting the use of non-violence to the fight for India's freedom against constituted authority. How far and in what manner this will have to be applied in the future I cannot say. The near future will perhaps throw light on this. Meanwhile it is difficult for me to continue in the Congress Working Committee, and I am resigning from it. I should like to make it clear that the non-violence I have believed in and preached to my brethren of the Khudai Khidmatgars is much wider. It affects all our life, and only this has permanent value. Unless we learn this lesson of non-violence fully, we shall never do away with the deadly feuds which have been the curse of the people of the Frontier. Since we took to non-violence and the Khudai Khidmatgars pledged themselves to it, we have largely succeeded in ending these feuds. Non-violence has added greatly to the courage of the Pathans. Because they were previously addicted to violence far more than others, they have profited by non-violence much more. We shall never really and effectively defend ourselves except through non-violence. Khudai Khidmatgars must, therefore, be what our name implies—pure servants of God and humanity—by laying down our own lives and never taking any life."

It is worthy of the Khansaheb and all that he has stood for during the past twenty years. He is a Pathan, and a Pathan may be said to be born with a rifle or sword in his hand. But the Khansaheb deliberately asked his Khudai Khidmatgars to shed all weapons when he asked them to join the *satyagraha* against the Rowlatt Act. He saw that this deliberate giving up of the weapons of violence had a magical effect. It was the only remedy for the blood-feuds which were handed down from sire to son and which had become part of the normal life of a Pathan.

They had decimated numerous families, and non-violence seemed to the Khansaheb to have come as a longed-for salvation. The violent blood-feuds would otherwise have no end and would spell the end of the Pathans. He saw as clear as daylight that, if he could persuade his people not to retaliate, the suicidal feuds would cease and the Pathans would be able to give a better account of their bravery. They took up his message, and put into practice what with them became non-violence of the brave.

Being so clear about his own faith and that of the Khudai Khidmatgars, there was for him no escape from resignation of his membership of the Congress Working Committee. His continuing on it would have been anomalous and might have meant an end of his life's work. He could not ask his people to join as recruits in the army and at the same time forget the law of tribal retaliation. The simple Pathan would have argued with him — and the argument would have been irresistible — that the present war was a war of retaliation and revenge, and that there was no difference between it and their blood-feuds.

I do not know how far the Khansaheb has succeeded in carrying his message to his people. This I know that with him non-violence is a matter not of intellectual conviction but of intuitive faith. Nothing can, therefore, shake it. About his followers he cannot say how far they will adhere to it. But that does not worry him. He has to do his duty which he owes to them. The result he leaves to God. He derives his *ahimsa* from the Holy Quran. He is a devout Musalman. During his stay with me for over a year I never saw him miss his *namaz* (prayers) or his *Ramzan* fast except when he was ill. But his devotion to Islam does not mean disrespect for other faiths. He has read the *Gita*. His reading is slight but selective, and he immediately assimilates what appeals to him. He lothes long argument and does not take long to make up his mind. If he succeeds in his mission, it would mean the solution of many another problem. But the result, no one can predict. "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

Sevagram, 16-7-40
Harijan, 21-7-1940

121

THE BEST FIELD FOR AHIMSA

Last week I wrote about three fields for the operation of *ahimsa*. I propose to invite attention today to the fourth and the best field for the operation of non-violence. This is the family field, in a wider sense than the ordinary. Thus members of an institution should be regarded as a family. Non-violence as between the members of such families should be easy to practise. If that fails, it means that we have not developed the capacity for pure non-violence. For, the love we have to practise towards our relatives or colleagues in our family or institution, we have to practise towards our foes, dacoits, etc. If we fail in one case, success in the other is a chimera.

We have generally assumed that, though it may not be possible to exercise non-violence in the domestic field, it is possible to do so in the political field. This has proved a pure delusion. We have chosen to describe our methods adopted so far as non-violence, and thus caricatured non-violence itself. If non-violence it was, it was much poor stuff that it proved useless at the critical moment. The alphabet of *ahimsa* is best learnt in the domestic school, and I can say from experience that, if we secure success there, we are sure to do so everywhere else. For a non-violent person the whole world is one family. He will thus fear none, nor will others fear him.

It will be retorted that those who satisfy such a test of non-violence will be few and far between. It is quite likely, but that is no reply to my proposition. Those who profess to believe in non-violence should know the implications of that belief. And if these scare them away, they are welcome to give up the belief. Now that the Congress Working Committee has made the position clear, it is necessary that those who claim to believe in non-violence should know what is expected of them. If, as a result, the ranks of the non-violent army thin down, it should not matter. An army, however small, of truly non-violent soldiers is likely some day to multiply itself. An army of those who are not truly non-violent is never likely to yield any use whether it increases or decreases.

Let no one understand from the foregoing that a non-violent army is open only to those who strictly enforce in their lives all the implications of non-violence. It is open to all those who accept the implications and make an ever-increasing endeavour to observe them. There never will be an army of perfectly non-violent people. It will be formed of those who will honestly endeavour to observe non-violence. For the last fifty years I have striven to make my life increasingly non-violent and to inspire my co-workers in the same direction, and I think I have had a fair amount of success. The growing darkness around, far from damping my zeal and dimming my faith, brightens them, and makes the implications of non-violence more clearly visible to me.

Sevagram, 15-7-40
Harijan, 21-7-1940

122

HOW TO CULTIVATE AHIMSA ?

Q. What is the good of your crying "*ahimsa, ahimsa*" in season and out of season ? Will it by itself teach people to be non-violent ? Would it not be better, instead, to tell people how pure *ahimsa* or the *ahimsa* of the strong can be cultivated ?

A. Yours is a very timely and opportune question. I have attempted before this on more occasions than one to answer it. But my effort has, I confess, been rather desultory. I have not concentrated upon it, or given it the weight I might have. This was all right while I was devoting all my energy to forging means to give battle to the government. But it had the result of retarding the growth of pure *ahimsa*, so that today we are not even within ken of the *ahimsa*, of the strong. If we now want to advance further, we ought, at least for some time, to completely forget the idea of offering non-violent resistance to constituted authority. If non-violence in the domestic field is successfully achieved, we shall surely see the non-violence against constituted authority revived in its purified form, and it will be irresistible.

Now that I am no longer in the Congress, I may not offer civil disobedience even in my own person in its name. But I am

certainly free to offer civil disobedience in my individual capacity whenever it may be necessary to. No one need suppose that all civil disobedience will necessarily be taboo while the country is still being educated in the *ahimsa* of the strong. But those who may want to join the non-violent force of my conception should not entertain any immediate prospect of civil disobedience. They should understand that, so long as they have not realized *ahimsa* in their own person in its pure form, there can be no civil disobedience for them.

Let not the mention of pure *ahimsa* frighten anybody. If we have a clear conception of it and have a living faith in its matchless efficacy, it will not be found to be so hard to practise as it is sometimes supposed to be. It will be well to remember the immortal Mahabharata verse in this connection. The Seer Poet therein loudly proclaims to the whole world that *Dharma* includes within itself both legitimate *Artha* and *Kama*, and asks why men do not follow the royal road of *Dharma* that leads to both earthly and spiritual bliss. *Dharma* here does not signify mere observance of externals. It signifies the way of truth and non-violence. The scriptures have given us two immortal maxims. One of these is: "*Ahimsa* is the supreme Law or *Dharma*." The other is: "There is no other Law or *Dharma* than Truth." These two maxims provide us the key to all lawful *Artha* and *Kama*. Why should we then hesitate to act up to them? Strange as it may appear, the fact remains that people find the easiest of things oftentimes to be the most difficult to follow. The reason, to borrow a term from the science of physics, lies in our inertia. Physicists tell us that inertia is an essential, and in its own place a most useful, quality of matter. It is that alone which steadies the universe and prevents it from flying off at a tangent. But for it the latter would be a chaos of motion. But inertia becomes an incubus and a vice when it ties the mind down to old ruts. It is this kind of inertia which is responsible for our rooted prejudice that to practise pure *ahimsa* is difficult. It is up to us to get rid of this incubus. The first step in this direction is firmly to resolve that all untruth and *himsa* shall hereafter be taboo to us, whatever sacrifice it might seem to involve. For, the good these may seem to achieve is in appearance only, but in reality it is deadly poison. If our resolve is firm and our

conviction clear, it would mean half the battle won, and the practice of these two qualities would come comparatively easy to us.

Let us confine ourselves to *ahimsa*. We have all along regarded the spinning wheel, village crafts, etc. as the pillars of *ahimsa*, and so indeed they are. They must stand. But we have now to go a step further. A votary of *ahimsa* will of course base upon non-violence, if he has not already done so, all his relations with his parents, his children, his wife, his servants, his dependants, etc. But the real test will come at the time of political or communal disturbances or under the menace of thieves and dacoits. Mere resolve to lay down one's life under the circumstances is not enough. There must be the necessary qualification for making the sacrifice. If I am a Hindu, I must fraternize with the Musalmans and the rest. In my dealings with them I may not make any distinction between my co-religionists and those who might belong to a different faith. I would seek opportunities to serve them without any feeling of fear or unnaturalness. The word 'fear' can have no place in the dictionary of *ahimsa*. Having thus qualified himself by his selfless service, a votary of pure *ahimsa* will be in a position to make a fit offering of himself in a communal conflagration. Similarly, to meet the menace of thieves and dacoits, he will need to go among, and cultivate friendly relations with, the communities from which thieves and dacoits generally come.

A brilliant example of this kind of work is provided by Ravishankar Maharaj. His work among the criminal tribes in Gujarat has evoked praise even of the Baroda State authorities. There is an almost unlimited field for this kind of work, and it does not call for any other talent in one besides pure love. Ravishankar Maharaj is an utter stranger to English. Even his knowledge of Gujarati is barely sufficient for everyday use. But God has blessed him with unlimited neighbourly love. His simplicity easily wins all hearts, and is the envy of everybody. Let his example provide a cue and inspiration to all those who may be similarly engaged in other fields of *satyagraha*.

Sevagram, 16-7-40
Harijan, 21-7-1940

123

A FLAW IN AHIMSA

Q. You have appealed to Britons to lay down arms and to adopt non-violence. But that raises a moral difficulty. A's *ahimsa* provokes B to *himsa* and makes him impervious to appeal to his heart. If a non-violent man comes up against an inanimate thing, his non-violence will have no effect on it. There is, therefore, some flaw somewhere in your belief. It is likely that *ahimsa* may have success in a restricted field. If so, what use is it for universal purposes? Your claim, therefore, of its universal use falls to the ground.

A. *Ahimsa* cannot be dismissed so lightly as you think. *Ahimsa* is the strongest force known. But if all can use the strongest force with equal ease, it would lose its importance. We have not been able yet to discover the true measure of the innumerable properties of an article of daily use like water. Some of its properties fill us with wonder. Let us not, therefore, make light of a force of the subtlest kind like *ahimsa*, and let us try to discover its hidden power with patience and faith. Within a brief space of time we have carried to a fairly successful conclusion a great experiment in the use of this force. As you know I have not set much store by it. Indeed I have hesitated even to call it an experiment in *ahimsa*. But according to the legend, as Rama's name was enough to float stones, even so the movement carried on in the name of *ahimsa* brought about a great awakening in the country and carried us ahead. It is difficult to forecast the possibilities when men with unflinching faith carry this experiment further forward. To say that those who use violence are all insensible is an exaggeration. Some do seem to lose their senses, but we are bound to be mistaken if we try to base a moral law on those exceptions. The safest course is to lay down laws on the strength of our usual experience, and our usual experience is that in most cases non-violence is the real antidote of violence, and it is safe to infer from it that the highest violence can be met by the highest non-violence.

But let us consider for a moment inanimate objects. He will surely break his head who strikes it against a stone. But supposing a stone comes against us through space, we can escape it by stepping aside, or if there is nowhere to step aside, we can bravely stay where we are and receive the stone. That will mean minimum injury and, in case it proves fatal, the death will not be as painful as it would be if we made an effort to ward it off.

Extend the thought a little further, and it is easy to see that, if a senseless man is left alone and no one tries to resist him, he is sure to exhaust himself. Indeed, it is not quite inconceivable that the loving sacrifice of many may bring an insane man to his senses. Instances are not wanting of absolutely insane people having come back to their senses.

Sevagram, 22-7-40
Harijan, 28-7-1940

124

NOT QUITE SO BAD

A friend quotes from a letter received from an English friend :

> "Do you think that Mahatma's appeal to every Briton is going to produce right reactions in the mind or heart of a single Briton ? That appeal has probably created more ill-will than anything else recently. We live in astonishing and critical times, and it is frightfully difficult to decide what should be done. At any rate we should try to avoid obvious dangers. So far as I can see, Mahatma's unadulterated policy must inevitably lead to disaster for India. How far he himself intends following it I do not know, for he has a wonderful way of adopting himself to his material."

Well, I happen to know that many more than one single heart have been touched by my "Appeal to Every Briton". I know that many English friends were anxious for me to take some such step. But I do not want to take comfort from the approbation, however pleasing in itself, of English friends. What is of value for me is to know that at least one Englishman thinks

as stated in the extract. Such knowledge should put me on my guard. It should make me more careful, if possible, in the selection of the words I use to express my thought. But no displeasure even of the dearest friends can put me off the duty I see clearly in front of me. And this duty of making the Appeal was so peremptory that it was impossible for me to put it off. As certain as I am writing this, the world has to come to the state to which I have invited Britain. Those who will be witnesses of that happy and not far-off event will recall my Appeal with gladness. I know that the Appeal has hastened its advent.

Why should a single Briton resent an appeal to him to be braver than he is, to be better than he is in every respect? He may plead inability, but he cannot be displeased by an appeal to his nobler nature.

Why should the Appeal breed any ill-will at all? There is no cause given for it by the manner or the matter of the Appeal. I have not advised cessation of fight. I have advised lifting it to a plane worthy of human nature, of the divinity man shares with God Himself. If the hidden meaning of the remarks is that by making the Appeal I have strengthened Nazi hands, the suggestion does not bear scrutiny. Herr Hitler can only be confounded by the adoption by Britain of the novel method of fighting. At one single stroke he will find that all his tremendous armament has been put out of action. A warrior lives on his wars whether offensive or defensive. He suffers a collapse, if he finds that his warring capacity is unwanted.

My Appeal is not from a coward to brave people to shed their bravery, nor is it a mockery from a fair-weather friend to one in distress. I suggest to the writer to re-read my Appeal in the light of my explanation.

One thing Herr Hitler, as every critic, may say. I am a fool without any knowledge of the world or human nature. That would be a harmless certificate which need excite neither ill-will nor anger. It would be harmless because I have earned such certificates before now. This one would be the latest of the many editions, and I hope not the last, for my foolish experiments have not yet ended.

So far as India is concerned, my unadulterated policy can never harm her, if she adopts it. If India as a whole rejects it, there can be no harm accruing except to those who may foolishly

pursue it. The correspondent has lighted upon my strong point when he says: "Mahatma has a wonderful way of adapting himself to his material." My instinctive knowledge of my material has given me a faith which cannot be moved. I feel within me that the material is ready. My instinct has not betrayed me once. But I must not build much upon past experience. "One step enough for me."

Sevagram, 24-7-40
Harijan, 28-7-1940

125

WHAT OF THE 'WEAK MAJORITY'?

Prof. Timur of Islamia College, Peshawar, writes:

"The world is indebted to you for revealing to it in these hard times the hidden values of non-violence. The experiment which you want to make of defending India against foreign aggression without the use of arms would be the boldest moral experiment of all times. There are two possible results of such a course. Either the conscience of the invaders may be awakened by the love of the invaded and they may repent of their sin. Or the proud invaders may take non-violence as a sign of physical weakness and degeneration, and may think it right to subjugate, rule over, and exploit, a weak people. This is the doctrine of Nietzsche which is followed in practice by Hitler. A great loss is involved in such conquest of the physically weak by the physically strong. A few strongwilled members of the conquered nation may refuse to own allegiance to the conquerors, but the large majority always submits and adopts servile manners to preserve its existence. Among them may be found great scientists, philosophers and artists. Genius and moral strength are not always combined in the same man. The strong man does not need armies to defend his liberty. He sacrifices his body to preserve his soul. Such men are, however, few and far between. It is the weak majority which needs protection. The question is how to protect it by non-violent methods. This is the real difficulty which every patriot feels when he thinks of adopting non-violence for the defence of his country.

I hope you would be kind enough to throw light on this point in an early issue of *Harijan*."

The weak majority no doubt needs protection. If all were soldiers either of *ahimsa* or *himsa*, no such questions as call for discussion in these columns would arise. There is always a weak majority that would want protection against man's mischief. The orthodox method we know. Nazism is its logical outcome. It is an answer to a definite want. A terrible wrong wantonly perpetrated against a whole nation cried out for redress. And Hitler arose to avenge it. Whatever the ultimate fortune of the war, Germany will not be humiliated again. Humanity will not stand a second outrage. But in seeking to avenge the wrong by the wrong method of violence brought to very near perfection, Hitler has brutalized not only Germans but a large part of humanity. The end of it we have not yet reached. For Britain, so long as she holds to the orthodox method, has to copy the Nazi methods, if she is to put up a successful defence. Thus the logical outcome of the violent method seems to be increasingly to brutalize man including "the weak majority". For it has to give its defenders the required measure of co-operation.

Now imagine the same majority defended after the method of non-violence. As it admits of no grossness, no fraud, no malice, it must raise the moral tone of the defenders. Hence there will be a corresponding rise in the moral tone of the "weak majority" to be defended. No doubt there will be difference in degree, but not in kind.

But the snag comes in when we consider the ways and means of working the non-violent method. In working the other, there is no difficulty in getting the human material. Therefore that way seems easy. In getting non-violent defenders, we have to pick and choose. Money cannot buy them. The non-violent process is wholly different from the one commonly known. I can only say that my own experience in organizing non-violent action for half a century fills me with hope for the future. It has succeeded in a marked measure in protecting the "weak majority". But half a century is nothing in discovering the hidden possibilities of this force and working them out. Those, therefore, like the correspondent who are attracted to non-violence should, according to their ability and opportunity, join the experiment. It has entered upon a most interesting, though at the same time a most difficult, stage. I am myself sailing on

uncharted waters. I have to take soundings every half-hour. The difficulty only braces me for the struggle.

Sevagram, 6-8-40
Harijan, 11-8-1940

126

IS NON-VIOLENCE IMPOSSIBLE ?

"One may admit that in theory non-violence is an infallible weapon, and that no power on earth can be a match for the man who has achieved non-violence to the fullest extent. But is this possible? There may be a rare *yogi* who can tame wild beasts like lions and tigers and render them meek as lambs, but the average man must resort to a rifle or similar weapon to protect himself against such beasts. You with your wonderful power may convert others by the sheer force of your thought, but the average man has to have recourse to worldly remedies like a law court, pleaders and so on. Even in the dim and distant past we rarely hear of men who practised *ahimsa* in daily affairs. Lord Buddha tried for a time to lead people along the path of *ahimsa*, but what happened after him? Society went back to its old ways, forgetting Buddha's teaching. The past, therefore, offers little promise, for the future, of society going along the lines of *ahimsa* any more than it has done before, and our sages, therefore, must have wisely left the world and resorted to the forest for practising truth and non-violence. You may inspire a few persons to study *ahimsa* but society as a whole is not likely to take to it. The same argument applies to India as a nation. She must needs seek means other than those of *ahimsa* in order to win her liberty. It is idle to expect an infant learning his primer to understand a book like Tilak's Gita. Even so is it idle to expect people steeped in worldly pleasures to understand the infallibility of *ahimsa*. Besides *ahimsa* is the final goal, attainment of which requires much greater preparation than is required in order to obtain a degree in medicine or engineering. We shall have to have numerous colleges and universities for the teaching of the science and art of truth and non-violence. Today society directs its energies to creating new wants and satisfying them. How do you expect it to turn those energies in the direction of researches in *ahimsa*?"

The doubts and difficulties raised by this correspondent occur to others also, and I have on various occasions tried to solve them too. But when the Working Committee of the Congress has been instrumental in making of *ahimsa* a live issue, it seems necessary to deal with these doubts and difficulties at some length.

The correspondent doubts in substance the universal application of *ahimsa*, and asserts that society has made little progress towards it. Teachers like Buddha arose and made some effort with some little success perhaps in their lifetime, but society is just where it was in spite of them. *Ahimsa* may be good enough to be the duty of an individual ; for society it is good for nothing, and India too will have to take to violence for her freedom.

The argument is, I think, fundamentally wrong. The last statement is incorrect inasmuch as the Congress has adhered to non-violence as the means for the attainment of Swaraj. It has indeed gone a step further. The question having been raised as to whether non-violence continues to be the weapon against all internal disturbances, the A.I.C.C. clearly gave the answer in the affirmative. It is only for protection against outside aggression that the Congress has maintained that it would be necessary to have an army. And then even on this matter there was a considerable body of the members of the A.I.C.C. who voted against the resolution. This dissent has got to be reckoned with when the question voted upon is one of principle. The Congress policy must always be decided by a majority vote, but it does not cancel the minority vote. It stands. Where there is no principle involved and there is a programme to be carried out, the minority has got to follow the majority. But where there is a principle involved, the dissent stands, and it is bound to express itself in practice when the occasion arises. That means that *ahimsa* for all occasions and all purposes has been recognized by a society, however small it may be, and that *ahimsa* as a remedy to be used by society has made fair strides. Whether it will make further strides or no is a different matter. The Working Committee's resolution, therefore, fails to lend any support to the correspondent's doubts. On the contrary it should, in a certain degree, dispel them.

Now for the argument that I am but a rare individual, and that what little society has done in the matter of *ahimsa* is due to

my influence, and that it is sure to disappear with me. This is not right. The Congress has a number of leaders who can think for themselves. The Maulana is a great thinker of keen intellect and vast reading. Few can equal him in his Arabic and Persian scholarship. Experience has taught him that *ahimsa* alone can make India free. It was he who insisted on the resolution accepting *ahimsa* as a weapon against internal disturbances. Pandit Jawaharlal is not a man to stand in awe of anyone. His study of history and contemporary events is second to none. It is after mature thought that he has accepted *ahimsa* as a means for the attainment of Swaraj. It is true that he has said that he would not hesitate to accept Swaraj if non-violence failed and it could be won by means of violence. But that is not relevant to the present issue. There are not a few other big names in the Congress who believe in *ahimsa* as the only weapon at least for the attainment of Swaraj. To think that all of them will give up the way of *ahimsa* as soon as I am gone, is to insult them and to insult human nature. We must believe that everyone can think for himself. Mutual respect to that extent is essential for progress. By crediting our companions with independent judgment we strengthen them and make it easy for them to be independent-minded even if they are proved to be weak.

I hope neither the correspondent nor anyone else believes that the Congress or many Congress leaders have bidden good-bye to *ahimsa*. To the limited extent that I have pointed out faith in *ahimsa* has been reiterated and made clear beyond any doubt by the Congress. I agree that the limit laid down by the Congress considerably narrows down the sphere of *ahimsa* and dims its splendour. But the limited *ahimsa* of the Congress is good enough for the purpose of our present argument. For I am trying to make out that the field of *ahimsa* is widening and the limited acceptance of *ahimsa* by the Congress sufficiently supports my position.

If we turn our eyes to the time of which history has any record down to our own time, we shall find that man has been steadily progressing towards *ahimsa*. Our remote ancestors were cannibals. Then came a time when they were fed up with cannibalism and they began to live on chase. Next came a stage when man was ashamed of leading the life of a wandering

hunter. He therefore took to agriculture and depended principally on mother earth for his food. Thus from being a nomad he settled down to civilized stable life, founded villages and towns, and from member of a family he became member of a community and a nation. All these are signs of progressive *ahimsa* and diminishing *himsa*. Had it been otherwise, the human species should have been extinct by now, even as many of the lower species have disappeared.

Prophets and *avatars* have also taught the lesson of *ahimsa* more or less. Not one of them has professed to teach *himsa*. And how should it be otherwise ? *Himsa* does not need to be taught. Man as animal is violent, but as Spirit is non-violent. The moment he awakes to the Spirit within he cannot remain violent. Either he progresses towards *ahimsa* or rushes to his doom. That is why the prophets and *avatars* have taught the lessons of truth, harmony, brotherhood, justice, etc — all attributes of *ahimsa*.

And yet violence seems to persist, even to the extent of thinking people like the correspondent regarding it as the final weapon. But, as I have shown, history and experience are against him.

If we believe that mankind has steadily progressed towards *ahimsa*, it follows that it has to progress towards it still further. Nothing in this world is static, everything is kinetic. If there is no progression, then there is inevitable retrogression. No one can remain without the eternal cycle, unless it be God Himself.

The present war is the saturation point in violence. It spells to my mind also its doom. Daily I have testimony of the fact that *ahimsa* was never before appreciated by mankind as it is today. All the testimony from the West that I continue to receive points in the same direction. The Congress has pledged itself to *ahimsa* however limited. I invite the correspondent and doubters like him to shed their doubts and plunge confidently into the sacred sacrificial fire of *ahimsa*. Then I have little doubt that the Congress will retrace its step. "It is always willing." Well has Pritam, our poet sung :

> Happiest are those that plunge in the fire,
> The lookers-on are all but scorched by flames.

Sevagram, 5-8-40
Harijan, 11-8-1940

127

THE LIVE ISSUE

Wait, Watch, and Pray

A few members of the A. I. C. C. who are out-and-out believers in non-violence visited Sevagram the other day. Some of them had remained neutral on the Delhi resolution, some had opposed it. What was the right attitude ? What were they to do next ? What was the programme before them ? Should they not retire forthwith ? These and other questions were troubling them, and they did not know what to do. In response Gandhiji began to do some loud thinking.

"Wait, watch, and pray," said he, and remained silent for a while. Then he said : "You must carefully follow what I am writing from week to week. You must be absolutely sure that you are out-and-out believers in non-violence. Can your *ahimsa* stand the test ? Rehearse to yourself what you would do in case of a riot. Those who have differed from us are no cowards. If they say that they cannot do without an army and police, they deserve a respectful hearing. I myself do not know what I should do in a difficult situation. You know I have capitulated on the question of the desirability of maintaining a police force. But what I can say is that I shall hope to behave non-violently, should the occasion arise. I should not like to die before my death. I do not want to prepare India for military defence from today. We should never forget that we are not the whole of India. The Congress is without doubt a powerful organization, but the Congress is not the whole of India. The Congress may not have an army, but those who do not believe in non-violence will. And if the Congress too surrenders, there is no one to represent the no-army mentality. This was my argument in a nutshell. But I failed to carry conviction. Therefore I must find fault not with my comrades but with myself. There must be some weakness in my argument, and so I must prepare myself to carry conviction to those who differ from me."

"But," he added, "I have digressed. What you and I have to do is to show our *ahimsa* when there is rioting or similar disturbance. If every one of us, wherever he is, begins doing so there will come into being a non-violent army. Even the limited non-violence that all are subscribing to would not have come into being, if we had seen no successful demonstrations of it. So we have to hold on to our faith, even if when the time comes we may fail. There is no use arguing with the comrades who have differed from us, I hope, only temporarily. The question is one of demonstrating the truth in us, and we won't do it, unless we show that we have no malice, no bitterness, no inclination to find faults. We have to prepare ourselves for the terrible ordeal. The testing time may come sooner than we imagine. I am sailing on an uncharted sea. I have no cut and dried programme, and I am brooding from moment to moment. In the meanwhile follow my weekly writings and carry out the constructive programme. The time for resignation is not yet. We must not be misunderstood."

"But," said a worker, "you have asked us to retire immediately, and all of us are ready."

"Your readiness is good, and it is enough for me for the time being. If you conscientiously voted against the Delhi resolution, you did nothing wrong; if you remained neutral, you did nothing wrong. You would have been wrong, if you had joined hands with those who sought to defeat the resolution on any but the ground of non-violence. For having given your vote on the Wardha resolution and having lost, you could not vote against the Delhi resolution which was the natural corollary of the Wardha resolution."

"But it was by accident that those who voted against the Delhi resolution, did so."

"No, it was by design. They are no believers in non-violence to the extent you are, but they wanted to defeat the resolution for the sake of their policy."

"But then how long are we to remain in the Congress?"

"I cannot give a definite answer. I shall have a talk with the Maulana. We must not rush the Maulana and the Working Committee. If they find that the out-and-out non-violence people were the sustaining part of the Congress organization, they will retrace their step."

"Then how long shall we wait ?"

"Until I give you the word."

"But," said one of them, "I disliked the Wardha resolution and wanted to resign at once."

"You might have done so. Then you would have been within your rights. But to do so now might savour of violence and self-righteousness. You must remember that I waited for more than a year before taking the final step, and then too I took it with the full approval of the friends of the Working Committee."

Sevagram, 7-8-40 M. D.

Harijan, 11-8-1940

128
MORAL SUPPORT

A friend writes as follows :

> "On the declaration of war you had advised giving moral support to Britain. Many persons never understood the implications of such support. You have never explained them either, so far as I know. I am a regular reader of *Harijanbandhu*, but I have not seen a clear explanation there. Everyone puts his own interpretation on the words. At the last sitting of the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee the leaders said: 'Bapu was ready to give moral support to Britain. What else has the Congress done in its latest resolution? As a matter of fact, the Congress asks for more than it promises to give. Bapu was willing to give all for nothing.' If war is itself a wrong act, how can it deserve moral support or blessings? In the Mahabharata, was the help that Lord Krishna gave to Arjuna moral, or was it more destructive than the deadliest weapons of war ?"

I did explain in *Harijan* what I meant by moral support. It is possible that the explanation did not appear in *Harijanbandhu*. In my English writings things are often left to be understood. The ellipses need, however, to be brought out in translations.

Broadly speaking, Britain could have had moral support from the Congress, if only she had acted justly towards India. There was no spirit of bargaining in my proposal because the help was not offered in exchange for anything.

Suppose my friend possesses moral strength which he has acquired through *tapasya*. And suppose I am in need of this

strength. I shall not get it from him for the asking. He may always be ready to give it to me, but if I have not the capacity within me to take it from him, how shall I ever obtain it? Moral support cannot really be given in the sense of giving. It automatically comes to him who is qualified to take it. And such a one can take it in abundance.

The Congress has this moral reservoir. The acceptance of the creed of truth and non-violence has been its *tapasya*. It has acquired world prestige through the acceptance of truth and non-violence for the attainment of its goal. If the Congress could have given its blessings to Britain, the world would have adjudged Britain's cause to be just. The masses over whom the Congress holds sway would also have acknowledged justice to be on Britain's side. But in all this the Congress would have had nothing material to give. The British government would, by its own action, have acquired moral prestige or strength. Though the Congress would not give one man or one pice as material aid, its moral support and blessings would definitely have turned the scales in favour of Britain. This is my belief. That my belief may be groundless and that the Congress never had any moral prestige is quite possible. The determination of this question is unnecessary for my argument.

But the opportunity for rendering moral support now seems almost to have gone. The Congress felt itself unable to adopt my course. It cannot be taken mechanically. It presupposes a living faith in truth and non-violence. The greatest quality in the Congress is this that it has never claimed to have what it really does not possess. And therefore its resolutions are dignified and carry force with them.

The help that the Congress in its latest resolution promises to give is material and for a consideration, eminently just, no doubt, but it is not and cannot be unconditional. I do not suggest that this position is either untenable or morally wrong. The resolution has dignity because it is the considered opinion of the majority. But by passing it the Congress has, in my opinion, surrendered the prestige it had or was supposed to have. Many congressmen say that, while they firmly believed that they could attain Swaraj through non-violence, they had never meant it to be understood that they could retain it also through non-violence. The entire outside world, however,

believed that the Congress was showing the golden way to the abolition of war. No one outside India ever dreamed that, if the Congress could wrest independence from a mighty power like Britain purely through non-violence, it would not be able to defend it also by the same means.

In my opinion Lord Krishna's help to Arjuna cannot be said to be moral, because he himself had an army and was an expert in the art of war. Duryodhana acted foolishly in that he asked for Krishna's army, while Arjuna got what he wanted in the person of the expert in the science of war. Therefore, if we interpret the Mahabharata literally, Lord Krishna's strength was certainly more destructive than that of his army. Because of his scientific skill Krishna was able, with an army of seven divisions, to destroy Duryodhana's army of eleven. But it is well known that I have never looked upon the Mahabharata as a mere record of earthly warfare. In the garb of an epic the poet has described the eternal warfare within the individual as well as in society, between Truth and Untruth, Violence and Non-violence, Right and Wrong. Looking at the epic even superficially one can understand how the great Vyasa has demonstrated that in this war the victor was no better off than the vanquished. Out of that vast concourse of warriors only seven remained to tell the tale. And the poet gives a true picture of the woeful state of mind also of these seven. The author has shown clearly too that in armed warfare the contending parties are certain to stoop to meanness and trickery. When occasion arose even the great Yudhishthira had to resort to untruth to save the battle.

One more question of the writer remains to be answered. If war is itself a wrong act, how can it be worthy of moral support or blessings? I believe all war to be wholly wrong. But if we scrutinize the motives of two warring parties, we may find one to be in the right and the other in the wrong. For instance, if A wishes to seize B's country, B is obviously the wronged one. Both fight with arms. I do not believe in violent warfare, but all the same, B, whose cause is just, deserves my moral help and blessings.

Sevagram, 12-8-40
Harijan, 18-8-1940

129

WHAT SHOULD A BRITON DO AND NOT DO ?

Q. In your appeal 'To Every Briton' you say: "You will invite Herr Hitler and Signor Mussolini to take what they want ......You will give all your 'earthly possessions' but never your souls or your minds......You will refuse to own allegiance to them." Please explain clearly what a Briton should or should not do. I ask the question because your answer will have a bearing on the duty of every *satyagrahi*.

A. Not to yield your soul to the conqueror means that you will refuse to do that which your conscience forbids you to do. Suppose the 'enemy' were to ask you to rub your nose on the ground or to pull your ears or to go through such humiliating performances, you will not submit to any of these humiliations. But if he robs you of your possessions, you will yield them because as a votary of *ahimsa* you have from the beginning decided that earthly possessions have nothing to do with your soul. That which you look upon as your own you may keep only so long as the world allows you to own it.

Not to yield your mind means that you will not give way to any temptation. Man is oftentimes weak-minded enough to be caught in the snare of greed and honeyed words. We see this happening daily in our social life. A weak-minded man can never be a *satyagrahi*. The latter's 'no' is invariably a 'no' and his 'yes' an eternal 'yes'. Such a man alone has the strength to be a devotee of truth and *ahimsa*. But here one must know the difference between steadfastness and obstinacy. If after having said 'yes' or 'no' one finds out that the decision was wrong and in spite of that knowledge clings to it, that is obstinacy and folly. It is necessary to think things out carefully and thoroughly before coming to any decision.

The meaning of refusal to own allegiance is clear. You will not bow to the supremacy of the victor, you will not help him to attain his object. Herr Hitler has never dreamt of possessing Britain. He wants the British to admit defeat. The victor can then demand anything he likes from the vanquished, and the

latter has perforce to yield. But if defeat is not admitted, the enemy will fight until he has killed his opponent. A *satyagrahi*, however, is dead to his body even before the enemy attempts to kill him, i.e. he is free from attachment to his body and only lives in the victory of the soul. Therefore, when he is already thus dead, why should he yearn to kill anyone? To die in the act of killing is in essence to die defeated. Because, if the enemy is unable to get what he wants from you alive, he will decide to get it after killing you. If, on the other hand, he realizes that you have not the remotest thought in your mind of raising your hand against him even for the sake of your life, he will lack the zest to kill you. Every hunter has had this experience. No one has ever heard of anyone hunting cows.

You may find that I have not answered the questions that you had in your mind. I have made a humble effort and dealt with your general question by giving you a few homely examples. I hope that from them you will be able to deduce answers to the questions left unanswered.

Dignity of the soul and self-respect are interpreted differently by different persons. I am aware that self-respect is often misinterpreted. The over-sensitive man may see disrespect or hurt in almost everything. Such a man does not really understand what self-respect is. That has been my experience in many cases. But no harm accrues even if a non-violent man holds mistaken notions of self-respect. He can die cheerfully for the sake of what he believes to be his dignity and self-respect. Only he has no right to injure or kill the supposed wrong-doer.

Sevagram, 13-8-40
Harijan, 18-8-1940

NAZISM IN ITS NAKEDNESS

A Dutch friend writes:

"You will perhaps be able to remember me having made a drawing of you at Romain Rolland's in 1931. Even before meeting you in person I followed the Indian movement with interest, in particular your leadership and your methods of combat. I am a Dutchman and lived for many years in Germany, where I had built up a living as an artist. Nazism, which gained hold in Germany seven years ago, caused me many conscientious doubts, especially with regard to the schooling of my three children. I often thought of writing to you to ask your advice; I knew, however, how fully your time was occupied and did not want to embarrass you with my difficulties. Eventually I managed to settle my affairs to my own satisfaction.

It is just one year ago since I left my house in Munich to spend some time in Holland. When war broke out in September we did not return to Germany but remained in Holland, since I had no wish to expose my children to the mental state of a country at war. On 10th May, by the use of every possible subtle trick, Holland was overpowered. After four days of the most ruthless bombing we fled to England and are now on our way to Java, the country of my birth, where I hope to find work, not as one of the group which exploits the colony but as a guest.

Europe has put its trust in violence, but for centuries past in the wars of soldier against soldier certain rules of chivalry were observed. Nazism has thrown that code overboard, and I can say with a clear conscience that no country has ever made use of such vicious treachery, villainy and cowardice in attaining its ends as modern Germany. The upbringing even of little children is based on the exercise of violence. Nazism systematically trains children to cunning and treachery even towards their own parents, to immorality and much more in the same spirit. When Indian students, who in the course of years have visited me at home, enthused about Germany, they were merely deceived by the gloss which Nazism knows so well how to lay on. A short explanation always convinced them of the tremendous difference between 'Indian National Socialism', as they often called your movement, and Hitler's Nazism.

Two books, *The Revolution of Destruction* and *Hitler Speaks*, have been written by Hermann Rauschning, a former intimate of Hitler. These books give a very clear impression of the movement in Germany, and should be read by all thinking people. Hitler aims at nothing less than the destruction of all moral values, and in the bulk of German youth he has already attained that end.

Your article in *Harijan* about the Jewish problem in Germany particularly interested me since I had many Jewish friends there. You say in it that, if ever a war were justified, it is this one against Germany. In the same article, however, you write that, if you were a Jew, you would attempt to soften the hearts of the Nazis by non-violence. Recently you also advised Britain and the British people to surrender their beautiful island to the German invader, without resistance by force, and to conquer him afterwards by non-violence. There is probably no man in the whole history who has a better knowledge of the practice of non-violence than yourself. Your views have awakened veneration and love for you in millions of hearts not only in India but in the outside world as well. Even your opponents are compelled eventually to honour you and admit the rightness of your aims and methods. But your opponents are the British, a people that, though like every other it has its weak points, in spite of its business sense, retains a heart.

Through Nazism, the German youth has lost all individuality of thought and feeling. The great mass of young people has lost its heart and is degraded to the level of a machine. The German conduct of the war is absolutely mechanical: machines are driven by robot men who have no qualms of conscience about crushing under their tanks the bodies of women and children, bombing open towns, killing hundreds of thousands of women and children, and on occasion using them as a screen for their advance, or distributing poisoned food. These are all facts, the truth of which I can vouch for. I have spoken with many of your followers about the possibility of applying non-violence against Germany. A friend of mine, whose work it is to cross-examine German prisoners of war in England, was deeply shocked by the spiritual narrowness and heartlessness of these young men, and agreed with me that non-violence could not be applied with any success against such robots. The most terrible side of the question is the fact that Hitler has been able, in the short space of seven years, to sink German youth to such depths of demoralization. A glance at either of the books mentioned above will convince you of that. I know of no other example in history of a people sinking spiritually so low.

I hope that my letter has not trespassed too much upon your time. On the return journey to Europe in a happier time which, if God wills, may soon be possible, I shall try to bring my wife and children for a short visit to you."

The friend has sent his name and address. But I withhold both for fear of harm coming to him through unnecessary publicity. The letter must be valued on its own intrinsic merits.

What, however, concerns me is not so much his characterization of Nazism as his belief that non-violent action may have no effect on Hitler or the Germans whom he has turned into so many robots. Non-violent action, if it is adequate, must influence Hitler and easily the duped Germans. No man can be turned into a permanent machine. Immediately the dead weight of authority is lifted from his head, he begins to function normally. To lay down any such general proposition as my friend has, betrays ignorance of the working of non-violence. The British Government can take no risks, can make no experiments in which they have not even a workable faith. But if ever an opportunity could be given to me, I should not hesitate to try, in spite of my physical limitations, what would appear to be impossible. For in *ahimsa* it is not the votary who acts in his own strength. Strength comes from God. If, therefore, the way is opened for me to go, He will give me the physical endurance and clothe my word with the needed power. Anyway all through my life I have acted in that faith. Never have I attributed any independent strength to myself. This may be considered by men who do not believe in a higher Power than themselves as a drawback and a helpless state. I must admit that limitation of *ahimsa* if it be accounted as such.

Sevagram, 6-8-40
Harijan, 18-8-1940

131

AN INTERESTING DISCOURSE

I

The Scope of Ahimsa

"You see that I am answering every one of your questions straightaway without the slightest hesitation. That is because the great question underlying your questions possesses me and I have rehearsed to myself every one of the situations arising out of the various implications of *ahimsa*." These words were uttered by Gandhiji towards the close of a long and interesting discourse with a number of friends from Poona who had come for the sole purpose of clearing their doubts on *ahimsa*. They were all out-and-out believers in non-violence, or if they were not, they had come all the way from Poona in order to be such believers, after their doubts were cleared. Balasaheb Kher, the ex-Prime Minister of Bombay, accompanied them. They had drawn up an exhaustive questionnaire, even at the risk of making some of their questions trite, for they did not want to leave any room for doubt.

The first question was about the limits and implications of *ahimsa* and the extent of its application. Should one stop with the human species or extend it to all creation?

Gandhiji said: "I was not prepared for this question. For the Congress *ahimsa* is naturally confined to the political field and therefore only to the human species. Hence out-and-out non-violence means for our purpose every variety of non-violence on the political field. In concrete terms it covers family relations, relations with constituted authority, internal disorders and external aggression. Put in another way it covers all human relations."

"Then what about meat-eating and egg-eating? Do they consist with non-violence?"

"They do. Otherwise we should have to exclude Mussalmans and Christians and a vast number of Hindus as possible

co-workers in *ahimsa.* I have known many meat-eaters to be far more non-violent than vegetarians."

"But what if we had to give them up for the sake of a principle?"

"Oh yes, we would, if we had to compromise our principle. Our principle is defined as I have shown already."

A Wrong Analogy

"If, as you have said, Polish resistance to the German invasion was almost non-violent, and you would thus seem to reconcile yourself with it, why do you object to the Wardha resolution of the Working Committee?"

"Surely," said Gandhiji, "there is no analogy between the two cases. If a man fights with his sword single-handed against a horde of dacoits armed to the teeth, I should say he is fighting almost non-violently. Haven't I said to our women that, if in defence of their honour they used their nails and teeth and even a dagger, I should regard their conduct non-violent? She does not know the distinction between *himsa* and *ahimsa.* She acts spontaneously. Supposing a mouse in fighting a cat tried to resist the cat with his sharp beak, would you call that mouse violent? In the same way, for the Poles to stand valiantly against the German hordes vastly superior in numbers, military equipment and strength, was almost non-violence. I should not mind repeating that statement over and over again. You must give its full value to the word 'almost'. But we are 400 millions here. If we were to organize a big army and prepare ourselves to fight foreign aggression, how could we by any stretch of imagination call ourselves almost non-violent, let alone non-violent? The Poles were unprepared for the way in which the enemy swooped down upon them. When we talk of armed preparation, we contemplate preparation to meet any violent combination with our superior violence. If India ever prepared herself that way, she would constitute the greatest menace to world peace. For, if we take that path, we will also have to choose the path of exploitation like the European nations. That is why I still regret the moment when my words lacked the power of convincing the Sardar and Rajaji. By having passed that resolution we proclaimed to the world that the *ahimsa* we had subscribed to all these years was not really *ahimsa* but a form of *himsa.*"

Administering Non-violently

Q. "How will you run your administration non-violently ?"

A. "If you assume that we would have won independence by non-violent means, it means that the bulk of the country had been organized non-violently. Without the vast majority of people having become non-violent, we could not attain non-violent Swaraj. If, therefore, we attain Swaraj by purely non-violent means, it should not be difficult for us to carry on the administration without the military. The *goondas* too will then have come under our control. If, for instance, in Sevagram we have five or seven *goondas* in a population of seven hundred who are non-violently organized, the five or seven will either live under the discipline of the rest or leave the village.

"But you will see that I am answering the question with the utmost caution, and my truth makes me admit that we might have to maintain a police force. But the police will be after our pattern, and not the British pattern. As we shall have adult suffrage, the voice of even the youngest of us will count. That is why I have said that the ideally non-violent State will be an ordered anarchy. That State will be the best governed which is governed the least. The pity is that no one trusts me with the reins of government! Otherwise I would show how to govern non-violently. If I maintain a police force, it will be a body of reformers."

"But," someone retorted, "you had the power in the Congress?"

"That was a paper-boat," said Gandhiji. "And then you must not forget that I never spared the Congress ministries. Munshi and Pantji came in for a lot of strictures from me. As I have said in another connection even the dirty water from the gutter, when it mixes with the water of the Ganga, becomes as pure as the Ganga water; even so I had expected even the *goondas* would work under Congress discipline. But evidently our ministers had not attained the purifying potency of the fabled Ganga."

"But," said Shri Kher, intervening at this stage, "the Congress ministers had no non-violent power with them. Even if 500 *goondas* had run amok and had been allowed to go unchecked, they would have dealt untold havoc. I do not know how even you would have dealt with them."

"Surely, surely," said Gandhiji, "I had rehearsed such situations. The ministers could on such occasions have gone out and allowed themselves to be done to death by the *goondas*. But let us face the fact that we had not the requisite *ahimsa*. We went in with our half-baked *ahimsa*. I do not mind it, inasmuch as we gave up power the moment we felt we should give it up. I am sure that, if we had adhered to strictest non-violence during these two or three years, the Congress would have made a tremendous advance in the direction of *ahimsa* and also independence."

"But," said Balasaheb, "four or five years ago when there was a riot, and I appealed to the leaders to go and throw themselves into the conflagration, no one was ready."

"So you are supporting my argument. You agree that our loyalty to *ahimsa* was lip-loyalty and not heart-loyalty. And if even the half-baked *ahimsa* carried us a long way, does it not follow that thorough *ahimsa* would have carried us very far indeed, even if it had not already brought us to the goal ?"

Non-violent Army

"But we cannot visualize how you will stand non-violently against a foreign invasion."

"I cannot draw the whole picture to you because we have no past experience to fall back upon and there is no reality facing us today. We have got the Government army manned by the Sikhs, Pathans and Gurkhas. What I can conceive is this that with my non-violent army of, say, two thousand people I should put myself between the two contending armies. But this, I know, is no answer. I can only say that we shall be able to reduce the invader's violence to a minimum. The general of a non-violent army has got to have greater presence of mind than that of a violent army, and God would bless him with the necessary resourcefulness to meet situations as they arise."

Shri Kher now raised a philosophical question. "The world," he said, "is made up of pairs of opposites. Where there is fear, there is courage too. When we walk on the edge of a precipice we walk warily, for we have fear. Fear is not a thing to despise. Will your non-violent army be above these pairs of opposites ?"

"No," said Gandhiji, replying in the same philosophical terminology. "No, for the simple reason that my army will represent one of the pair — *ahimsa* — out of the pair of *himsa* and

ahimsa. Neither I nor my army is above the pair of opposites. The state of *gunatita*, in the language of the Gita, rises above *himsa* and *ahimsa* both. Fear has its use, but cowardice has none. I may not put my finger into the jaws of a snake, but the very sight of the snake need not strike terror into me. The trouble is that we often die many times before death overtakes us.

"But let me explain what my army will be like. They need not and will not have the resourcefulness or understanding of the general, but they will have a perfect sense of discipline to carry out faithfully his orders. The general should have the quality which commands the unquestioning obedience of his army, and he will expect of them nothing more than this obedience. The Dandi March was entirely my conception. Pandit Motilalji first laughed at it, he thought it to be a quixotic adventure, and Jamnalalji suggested instead a march on the Viceroy's House! But I could not think of anything but the salt march as I had to think in terms of millions of our countrymen. It was a conception that God gave me. Pandit Motilalji argued for some time, and then he said he must not argue, as after all I was the general and he must have faith in me. Later when he saw me in Jambusar he was completely converted, for he saw with his own eyes the awakening that had come over the masses. And it was an almost magical awakening. Where in history shall we find parallels of the cool courage that our women displayed in such large numbers?

"And yet none of the thousands who took part in the movement were above the average. They were erring, sinning mortals. God has a way of making use of the most fragile instruments and remaining Himself untouched by everything. Only He is *gunatita*.

The Real Equipment

"And then what after all is the army that wins? You know Rama's reply to Vibhishana when the latter wondered how Rama would be able to conquer a foe like Ravana, when he had no chariot, no armour, nor any shoes to his feet? Rama says :*

"The chariot, my dear Vibhishana, that wins the victory for Rama is of a different sort from the usual one. Manliness

* Gandhiji only made a reference to these verses from Tulsidas' Ramayan. I translate them here fully for the benefit of the reader. M.D.

and courage are its wheels; unflinching truth and character its banners and standards; strength, discrimination, self-restraint and benevolence its horses, with forgiveness, mercy, equanimity their reins; prayer to God is that conqueror's unerring charioteer, dispassion his shield, contentment his sword, charity his axe, intellect his spear, and perfect science his stout bow. His pure and unwavering mind stands for a quiver, his mental quietude and his practice of *yama* and *niyama* stand for the sheaf of arrows, and the homage he pays to Brahmans and his *guru* is his impenetrable armour. There is no other equipment for victory comparable to this; and, my dear friend, there is no enemy who can conquer the man who takes his stand on the chariot of *dharma*. He who has a powerful chariot like this is a warrior who can conquer even that great and invincible enemy — the world. Hearken unto me and fear not.'

"That is the equipment," added Gandhiji, "that can lead us to victory. I have not retired from the world, nor do I mean to. I am no recluse. I am content to do what little work I can in Sevagram and give what guidance I can to those that come to me. What we need is faith. And what is there to be lost in following the right path? The worst that can happen to us is that we shall be crushed. Better to be crushed than to be vanquished.

"But if we had to equip ourselves violently, I should be at my wit's end. I cannot even think out an armament plan, much less work it. On the other hand my non-violent plan is incredibly simpler and easier, and with God as our Commander and Infallible Guide where is there cause for any fear?"

M. D.

Sevagram, 21-8-40
Harijan, 25-8-1940

AN INTERESTING DISCOURSE

II

A Sister's Questions

Now came questions of practical difficulty.

Q. "May a non-violent man possess wealth, and if he may, how can he keep it non-violently?"

A. "He may not own any wealth, though he may possess millions. Let him hold it in trust. If he lives among dacoits and thieves, he may possess very little, indeed little beyond a loin-cloth. And if he does this, he will convert them.

"But you must not generalize. In a non-violent State there will be very few dacoits. For the individual the golden rule is that he will *own* nothing. If I decided to settle and work among the so-called criminal tribes, I should go to them without any belongings and depend on them for my food and shelter. The moment they feel that I am in their midst in order to serve them, they will be my friends. In that attitude is true *ahimsa.* But I have discussed this question at length in a recent article in *Harijan.*"

Q. "How is one to protect the honour of women?"

A. "I am afraid you do not read *Harijan* regularly. I discussed this question years ago, and have discussed it often since. The question may be discussed under two heads: (1) how is a woman to protect her own honour? and (2) how are her male relatives to protect it?

"As regards the first question, where there is a non-violent atmosphere, where there is the constant teaching of *ahimsa,* woman will not regard herself as dependent, weak or helpless. She is not really helpless when she is really pure. Her purity makes her conscious of her strength. I have always held that it is physically impossible to violate a woman against her will. The outrage takes place only when she gives way to fear or does not realize her moral strength. If she cannot meet the assailant's physical might, her purity will give her the strength

to die before he succeeds in violating her. Take the case of Sita. Physically she was a weakling before Ravana, but her purity was more than a match even for his giant might. He tried to win her with all kinds of allurements but could not carnally touch her without her consent. On the other hand, if a woman depends on her own physical strength or upon a weapon she possesses, she is sure to be discomfited whenever her strength is exhausted.

"The second question is easily answered. The brother or father or friend will stand between his protegee and her assailant. He will then either dissuade the assailant from his wicked purpose or allow himself to be killed by him in preventing him. In so laying down his life he will not only have done his duty, but given a new accession of strength to his protegee who will now know how to protect her honour."

"But," said one of the sisters from Poona, "there lies the rub. How is a woman to lay down her life? Is it possible for her to do so?"

"Oh!" said Gandhiji, "any day more possible for her than for man. I know that women are capable of throwing away their lives for a much lesser purpose. Only a few days ago a young girl of twenty burnt herself to death as she felt she was being persecuted for refusing to go in for ordinary studies. And she perished with such cool courage and determination! She ignited her sari with an ordinary oil-light and did not so much as raise a cry, so that the people in the neighbouring room were unaware of the happening until all was over. I do not give these details to commend her example, but to show how easily woman can throw away her life. I at any rate am incapable of this courage. But I agree that it is not the external light but the inner light that is needed."

The same sister wondered how one was to avoid anger and violence altogether in dealing with children. "You know our old adage," said Gandhiji laughing heartily, "play with him till he is five, hammer him for ten years, treat him as your friend when he is sixteen." "But," he added, "don't you worry. If you have to be angry with your child on occasions, I shall call that anger non-violent anger. I am speaking of wise mothers, not the ignorant ones who do not deserve to be mothers."

Central Teaching of the Gita

The discussion again took a serious turn with a challenging question on the philosophy of the Gita : "Is the central teaching of the Gita selfless action or non-violence ?"

"I have no doubt that it is *anasakti*—selfless action. Indeed I have called my little translation of the Gita *Anasakti-yoga*. And *anasakti* transcends *ahimsa*. He who would be *anasakta* (selfless) has necessarily to practise non-violence in order to attain the state of selflessness. *Ahimsa* is, therefore, a necessary preliminary, it is included in *anasakti*, it does not go beyond it."

"Then does the Gita teach *himsa* and *ahimsa* both ?"

"I do not read that meaning in the Gita. It is quite likely that the author did not write it to inculcate *ahimsa*, but as a commentator draws innumerable interpretations from a poetic text, even so I interpret the Gita to mean that, if its central theme is *anasakti*, it also teaches *ahimsa*. Whilst we are in the flesh and tread the solid earth, we have to practise *ahimsa*. In the life beyond there is no *himsa* or *ahimsa*."

"But," said Balasaheb Kher, "Lord Krishna actually counters the doctrine of *ahimsa*. For Arjuna utters this pacifist resolve :

> Better I deem it, if my kinsmen strike,
> To face them weaponless, and bare my breast
> To shaft and spear, than answer blow with blow.

And Lord Krishna teaches him to answer blow with blow."

What to Do ?

"There I join issue with you," said Gandhiji. "Those words of Arjuna were words of pretentious wisdom. 'Until yesterday,' says Krishna to him, 'you fought your kinsmen with deadly weapons without the slightest compunction. Even today you would strike if the enemy was a stranger and not your own kith and kin!' The question before him was not of non-violence, but whether he should slay his nearest and dearest."

Again the questioners came down to solid earth, and began to put questions about the Congress and the attitude of those who believed in complete non-violence. Gandhiji explained that they should refrain till he gave the word. He wanted still to plead with the leaders who had passed the Poona resolution.

He expected to show them that the Congress would lose all its prestige if they adhered to the new policy. But the question had to be dealt with patiently. On the other hand it did not matter even if the Congress resolution received no response. The resolution was as good as enforced, when it was deliberately passed, and their duty did not alter with refusal of the government to respond. "Besides," he added, "there is an inherent flaw in the Poona resolution. It should be obvious to the meanest understanding that, if you think that you cannot do without arms in meeting foreign aggression, they would *a fortiori* be needed in dealing with daily disturbances — internecine feuds, dacoities and riots. For organized unarmed resistance against an organized invasion is any day easier than deliberate *ahimsa* in face of a dacoit who breaks into your house at night. That calls for *ahimsa* of the highest type."

Sevagram, 26-8-40 M. D.
Harijan, 1-9-1940

133

MY IDEA OF A POLICE FORCE

A friend writes as follows:

"The English sister, whom you recently quoted, rightly says that efforts should always be made to stem external aggression by non-violent means, and that present circumstances offer a peculiarly suitable opportunity for demonstrating that it is possible to secure better results through non-violence than through armed force. But *ahimsa* as a weapon to counter internal disorders presents difficulties. In our country there can be three types of internal disturbances, viz. communal, industrial, and dacoities. The root causes of these are mutual distrust, social injustice, and grinding poverty due to economic exploitation and unemployment. So long as these causes exist, the threefold disturbances will take place in spite of armed forces. Your constructive programme is the only means of removing these root causes. But it will take time. What is to be done in the meantime? Can non-violence solve the difficulties?

"Can we envisage an order of society in which we will not have to resort to *himsa* in any form whatsoever? Suppose

for argument's sake that there exists a society where the majority does not possess goods that would excite envy and where everyone has the wherewithal to live contentedly. Even then it does not seem possible that there will be no disputes over proprietorship of land, lending and borrowing of money, and other business dealings. For these, therefore, we must provide the means of justice and see that the decisions of the courts or arbitration boards are carried out. For this it will be essential to have a police force. You have yielded this point. But I should like to know what restrictions you would place on the police force. If there were a non-violent government in power today, would it use the police force for quelling internal disorders? And are you willing to maintain it for all time or only temporarily? My mind refuses to go so far as to envisage a time when a police force will be a superfluity. There seems to me to be no escape from placing this limitation, as it were, on *ahimsa*."

The questions asked in this letter are of the utmost importance and deserve notice. If true *ahimsa* had come into being within us, and if our so-called *satyagraha* movements had been truly non-violent, these questions would not have arisen because they would have been solved.

For one who has never seen the arctic regions an imaginary description of them, however elaborate, can convey but an inadequate idea of the reality. Even so is it with *ahimsa*. If all Congressmen had been true to their creed, we would not be vacillating between violence and non-violence as we are today. The fruits of *ahimsa* would be in evidence everywhere. There would be communal harmony, the demon of untouchability would have been cast out, and, generally speaking, we should have evolved an ordered society. But the reverse is the case just now. There is even definite hostility to the Congress in certain quarters. The word of Congressmen is not always relied on. The Muslim League and most of the Princes have no faith in the Congress and are in fact inimical to it. If Congressmen had true *ahimsa* in them, there would be none of this distrust. In fact the Congress would be the beloved of all.

Therefore I can only place an imaginary picture before the votaries of *ahimsa*.

So long as we are not saturated with pure *ahimsa* we cannot possibly win Swaraj through non-violence. We can come into power only when we are in a majority or, in other words, when

the large majority of people are willing to abide by the law of *ahimsa.* When this happy state prevails the spirit of violence will have all but vanished and internal disorder will have come under control.

Nevertheless I have conceded that even in a non-violent State a police force may be necessary. This, I admit, is a sign of my imperfect *ahimsa.* I have not the courage to declare that we can carry on without a police force as I have in respect of an army. Of course I can and do envisage a State where the police will not be necessary ; but whether we shall succeed in realizing it, the future alone will show.

The police of my conception will, however, be of a wholly different pattern from the present day force. Its ranks will be composed of believers in non-violence. They will be servants, not masters, of the people. The people will instinctively render them every help, and through mutual co-operation they will easily deal with the ever decreasing disturbances. The police force will have some kind of arms, but they will be rarely used, if at all. In fact the policemen will be reformers. Their police work will be confined primarily to robbers and dacoits. Quarrels between labour and capital and strikes will be few and far between in a non-violent State, because the influence of the non-violent majority will be so great as to command the respect of the principal elements in society. Similarly there will be no room for communal disturbances. Then we must remember that when such a Congress government comes into power the large majority of men and women of 21 years and over will have been enfranchised. The rigid and cramped constitution of today has of course no place in this picture.

Sevagram, 20-8-40
Harijan, 1-9-1940

134

NON-VIOLENCE OF THE BRAVE

A correspondent writes :

> "You say non-violence is for the brave, not for cowards. But, in my opinion, in India the brave are conspicuous by their absence. Even if we claim to be brave, how is the world to believe us when it knows that India has no arms and is therefore incapable of defending herself ? What then should we do to cultivate non-violence of the brave ?"

The correspondent is wrong in thinking that in India the brave are conspicuous by their absence. It is a matter for shame that because foreigners once labelled us as cowards we should accept the label. Man often becomes what he believes himself to be. If I keep on saying to myself that I *cannot* do a certain thing, it is possible that I may end by really becoming incapable of doing it. On the contrary, if I have the belief that I *can* do it, I shall surely acquire the capacity to do it even if I may not have it at the beginning. Again it is wrong to say that the world today believes us to be cowards. It has ceased to think so since the *satyagraha* campaign. The Congress prestige has risen very high in the West during the past twenty years. The world is watching with astonished interest the fact that, although we have no arms, we are hoping to win Swaraj and have indeed come very near it. Moreover, it sees in our non-violent movement rays of hope for peace in the world and its salvation from the hell of carnage. The bulk of mankind has come to believe that, if ever the spirit of revenge is to vanish and bloody wars are to cease, the happy event can happen only through the policy of non-violence adopted by the Congress. The correspondent's fear and suspicion are, therefore, unfounded.

It will now be seen that the fact that India is unarmed is no obstacle in the path of *ahimsa*. The forcible disarmament of India by the British Government was indeed a grave wrong and a cruel injustice. But we can turn even injustice to our

advantage, if God be with us, or if you prefer, we have the skill to do so. And such a thing has happened in India.

Arms are surely unnecessary for a training in *ahimsa*. In fact the arms, if any, have to be thrown away, as the Khansaheb did in the Frontier Province. Those who hold that it is essential to learn violence before we can learn non-violence, would hold that only sinners can be saints.

Just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for non-violence. Violence does not mean emancipation from fear, but discovering the means of combating the cause for fear. Non-violence, on the other hand, has no cause for fear. The votary of non-violence has to cultivate the capacity for sacrifice of the highest type in order to be free from fear. He recks not if he should lose his land, his wealth, his life. He who has not overcome all fear cannot practise *ahimsa* to perfection. The votary of *ahimsa* has only one fear, that is of God. He who seeks refuge in God ought to have a glimpse of the *Atman* that transcends the body; and the moment one has a glimpse of the Imperishable *Atman* one sheds the love of the perishable body. Training in non-violence is thus diametrically opposed to training in violence. Violence is needed for the protection of things external, non-violence is needed for the protection of the *Atman*, for the protection of one's honour.

This non-violence cannot be learnt by staying at home. It needs enterprise. In order to test ourselves we should learn to dare danger and death, mortify the flesh, and acquire the capacity to endure all manner of hardships. He who trembles or takes to his heels the moment he sees two people fighting is not non-violent, but a coward. A non-violent person will lay down his life in preventing such quarrels. The bravery of the non-violent is vastly superior to that of the violent. The badge of the violent is his weapon — spear, or sword, or rifle. God is the shield of the non-violent.

This is not a course of training for one intending to learn non-violence. But it is easy to evolve one from the principles I have laid down.

It will be evident from the foregoing that there is no comparison between the two types of bravery. The one is limited,

the other is limitless. There is no such thing as out-daring or out-fighting non-violence. Non-violence is invincible. There need be no doubt that this non-violence can be achieved. The history of the past twenty years should be enough to reassure us.

Sevagram, 27-8-40
Harijan, 1-9-1940

135

SINDH

The position of Congressmen in Sindh is by no means enviable. They have a most difficult time before them. Their non-violence, if they have it in them, has not benefited those who live in fear of their lives. It is true that no one else has helped them. I warned them at the very outset that they must learn the art of helping themselves as others do, or by non-violence as Congressmen are supposed or expected to do. In some places they are organizing national guards. Those who do, look up to Congressmen for help and guidance. For the latter have been their helpers and guides hitherto. Some Congressmen feel that without any intention themselves of taking up arms they can put courage into the people, if they train them in the art of self-defence whether with or without arms. The question has attained importance and demands immediate answer in view of the unequivocal resolution of the A.I.C.C. recently held at Poona. I am quite clear that no Congressman, so long as he is even a four anna member of the Congress, can take part in organizing or aiding self-defence groups without committing a breach of the Poona resolution. But I am equally clear that it is the duty of those Congressmen who feel the need for helping self-defence groups and have the capacity for doing so, to go to the rescue of the terror-stricken men. This they can do by resigning their membership of the Congress. By doing so they will enhance the prestige of the Congress and

their own usefulness. The fact that they feel the call to help is the decisive factor in determining their course of action.

Sevagram, 28-8-40
Harijan, 1-9-1940

136

ANOTHER DISCOURSE

Bharatanandji, whose acquaintance the reader will make in another column, demurred to the compliment given to his countrymen, the Poles, by Gandhiji. "You say that the Poles were 'almost non-violent'. I do not think so. There was black hatred in the breast of Poland, and I do not think the compliment is deserved."

"You must not take what I say, so terribly literally. If ten soldiers resist a force of a thousand soldiers armed cap-a-pie, the former are almost non-violent, because there is no capacity for anything like proportionate violence in them. But the instance I have taken of the girl is more appropriate. A girl who attacks her assailant with her nails, if she has grown them, or with her teeth if she has them, is almost non-violent, because there is no premeditated violence in her. Her violence is the violence of the mouse against the cat."

"Well then, Bapuji, I will give you an instance. A young Russian girl was attacked by a soldier. She used her nails and teeth against him and tore him, so to say, to pieces. Was she almost non-violent?"

"How can it cease to be non-violence, if offered on the spur of the moment, simply because it was successful?" I interposed.

"No," said Gandhiji almost inadvertently.

"Then I am really puzzled," said Bharatanandji. "You say there should be no premeditated violence and no capacity to offer proportionate violence. Here in this case she by her success proved that she had the capacity."

"I am sorry," said Gandhiji, "that I inadvertently said 'no' to Mahadev. There was violence there. It was equally matched."

"But, then, is not intention ultimately the test? A surgeon uses his knife non-violently; or a keeper of the peace uses force against miscreants in order to protect society. That too he does non-violently," said Bharatanandji.

"Who is to judge the intention? Not we. And for us the deed in most cases is the test. We normally look at the action and not at the intention. God alone knows the intention."

"Then God alone knows what is *himsa* and what is *ahimsa*."

"Yes, God alone is the final judge. It is likely that what we believe to be an act of *ahimsa* is an act of *himsa* in the eyes of God. But for us the path is chalked out. And then you must know that a true practice of *ahimsa* means also in one who practises it the keenest intelligence and wide-awake conscience. It is difficult for him to err. When I used those words for Poland, and when I suggested to a girl believing herself to be helpless that she might use her nails and teeth without being guilty of violence, you must understand the meaning at the back of my mind. There is the refusal to bend before overwhelming might in the full knowledge that it means certain death. The Poles knew that they would be crushed to atoms, and yet they resisted the German hordes. That was why I called it almost non-violence."

"But, Bapuji, I cannot somehow forget that it is God who is the judge, and God permits violence. There is a Puranic story I should like to tell you. God Shiva once suddenly disappeared as he and Parvati were in the midst of a conversation. But soon he appeared again. On being asked where he had been, he said he had gone to the rescue of a *bhakta* who had been attacked, but he had come back on finding that the *bhakta* had helped himself by striking his assailant with a stone."

"Well, well, no amount of argument can teach us *ahimsa*. And you must not forget that one cannot be sure of the purity of one's intention until one has gone through the whole course of spiritual training laid down by masters of *yoga* like Patanjali. Perfect *chittashuddhi* (purification of mind) cannot be achieved in any other way."

Here Bharatanandji seemed to be at one with Gandhiji, and he agreed that anyone might easily deceive himself. But he came with another poser. "*Ahimsa*, *brahmacharya*, spinning are all *sadhanas*," he said, "and whereas one may suit one, it

may not suit another. Why have you made of *ahimsa* a universal precept ? "

"When a means has been tried by a scientist and he has found it of infallible effect he puts it before all. You know the maxim ' यथा पिण्डे तथा ब्रह्माण्डे.' What is true of the individual is true of the universe."

" But you lay down the same law for a saint and a robber ! "

" The law is the same ; the way may be more difficult for the robber than for the saint. The law is the ideal, no matter how much individuals may fall short of the ideal."

" But you forget the reality before the ideal."

" No. The reality is always present before me, but my striving is always to reach the ideal. Euclid's straight line exists only in our conception, but we have always to postulate it. We have always to strive to draw a true line corresponding to Euclid's imaginary line."

As I listened to this I was put in mind of the exactly similar words of Carlyle: " Ideals can never be completely embodied in practice. And yet it is never to be forgotten that ideals do exist ; that if they be not approximated to at all, the whole matter goes to wreck ! Infallibly. No bricklayer builds a wall *perfectly* perpendicular ; mathematically this is not possible ; a certain degree of perpendicularity suffices him; and he, like a good bricklayer who must have done with his job, leaves it so. And yet if he sways *too much* from the perpendicular ; above all if he throws a planet and level quite away from him, and piles brick on brick heedless, just as it comes to hand — such a bricklayer is in a bad way. He has forgotten himself ; but the law of gravitation does not forget to act on him ; he and his wall rush down into confused welter of ruin."

M. D.

Sevagram, 2-9-40

Harijan, 8-9-1940

137

HOW TO QUENCH IT ?

Elsewhere in these columns the reader will see "A Seeker's" letter * in which he has asked a question which must have occurred to everyone. The beauty lies in the way in which he has introduced the question. He has depicted the present conflagration in such lurid colours that violence cannot but stink in our nostrils. The reader is sure instinctively to exclaim: "Even if it were possible to win the kingdom of the world by means of such violence, I would not have it."

But this exclamation will be of no avail to quench the conflagration. No doubt it will some day quench itself, but it means mutual fratricidal slaughter like that of the Yadavas of

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* "A SEEKER'S" QUESTION

The Editor, *Harijan*

Sir,

You must be reading in the papers how the war between Germany and England is being waged. Aeroplanes filled with thousands of incendiary bombs do untold havoc, and newspapers and broadcasts describe with pleasure the amount of injury each side is able to inflict on the other. The general public is consoled by being told that the damage done in the enemy country is greater than what the enemy has done in theirs. It is said that military objectives are the sole targets of the raiders: but it is impossible to believe that, flying at great heights and often through smoke screens, the bombers can really take proper aim. And then we hear from both sides of the 'successful' blockades, the object of which is to spread famine; and famine must necessarily, more than even bombs, hurt the civilian population.

Is it impossible for these belligerents to think in terms of humanity and stop this carnage? How can any good ever come out of war? And must we not, therefore, declare ourselves unreservedly against war for or against anybody or any ideology?

There must be many godly people in the warring countries who think in this way but have not the strength to raise their voice in protest. May we not help them to do so and at the same time rouse the sleeping conscience of all thinking people?

Yours
A Seeker

old who destroyed themselves and relieved the earth of so much burden. And such a consummation would any day be preferable to a perpetual conflagration. But no one would wish for this. What one would devoutly wish for is some brave step to stop the conflagration before there is total destruction. This can only be a non-violent step. How and when it can be taken has to be discovered. The "Seeker" will be satisfied when the discovery is made. In my opinion the discovery has already been made. If India can win Swaraj non-violently even while this conflagration is going on, the latter is bound to be extinguished by that one event. That being my firm faith I fought the Wardha resolution tooth and nail, and secured my freedom — not indeed to tickle my vanity but for the success of the experiment. And if I have to forego this freedom — as is quite likely — it will be for the same purpose.

We read in our religious books that whenever, in the days of old, all ordinary means failed to secure release from an ordeal or a calamity, people resorted to *tapasya* (penance), i.e. actually burnt themselves. I do not regard these stories as legendary. *Tapasya* is of various kinds. Misguided men can resort to it, as we find them doing today. The wise also can do it. It is worth while understanding the implication of *tapasya*. It was by dint of *tapasya* that Western scientists made their discoveries. *Tapasya* does not simply consist of betaking oneself to the forest and sitting down there surrounded by blazing fires. That *tapasya* may even be the height of folly. We have, therefore, to discriminate.

The question asked by "A Seeker" does not arise out of despair. It is intended to quicken the conscience of those who believe in *ahimsa*. I have already shown the way. It is the fulfilment of the thirteenfold constructive programme described in a recent article. Those who will carry it out in faith, in full knowledge, and without the slightest fuss, will have done their share in the *tapasya* to quench the conflagration. They will achieve two ends at the same time. They will make India free, and will also quench the conflagration. It is likely that the number of such people is limited, so limited that it can have no effect. I have maintained that, even if there is one individual who is almost completely non-violent, he can put out the conflagration. But I have suggested a *tapasya* which can easily be performed by the

average individual. In this age of democracy it is essential that desired results are achieved by the collective effort of the people. It will no doubt be good to achieve an objective through the effort of a supremely powerful individual, but it can never make the community conscious of its corporate strength. An individual's success will be like a millionaire doling free food to millions of starving people. We should, therefore, bend our energies to a fulfilment of the thirteenfold constructive programme. It may or may not bring Swaraj, but we shall surely have the satisfaction of having done our best.

There is a warning in the "Seeker's" letter to which I should like to draw the reader's attention. He says papers and broadcasts describe with devilish pleasure the amount of injury each is able to inflict upon the other, and suggests that such news should sicken people instead of providing pleasure, if they are to take part in the propagation of peace. I agree. Such people will not be able to carry out even the constructive programme, for they will have no faith in it.

However that may be, it is as clear as daylight that, if this conflagration is to be put out through non-violent effort, it will be done only by India.

Sevagram, 2-9-40
Harijan, 8-9-1940

138

CONGRESS AHIMSA

I am being inundated with letters complaining that by giving my definition of *ahimsa* before the Poona Congressmen, who saw me recently at Wardha, I have seriously circumscribed the scope of *ahimsa*. These friends forget that my remarks were confined to Congress *ahimsa* only. Personally I would not kill insects, scorpions or even snakes. Nor would I under any circumstance take meat. But I may not impose the creed of such *ahimsa* on the Congress. The Congress is not a religious institution; it is a political organization. Its non-violence is limited to human beings. If it were to be further extended, only Hindus, and among even them only Vaishnavas and Jains, would be left to participate in it. Millions of Hindus who eat fish and meat would be excluded. My proposition, to my mind, is so simple and straight that I never thought that anybody could object to it.

My critics should further understand that many Mussalmans have not accepted even the limited *ahimsa* of the Congress as their creed, and that the Congress itself has, by its Wardha and Poona resolutions, so cramped its scope as to render it almost meaningless. It follows, therefore, that any attempt to widen its scope as to include the sub-human species will defeat its purpose. Unlimited *ahimsa* will take time to be universalized. We will have ample cause to congratulate ourselves, if we learn to substitute the law of love in society for that of the jungle, and if, instead of harbouring ill-will and enmity in our bosoms against those whom we regard as our enemies, we learn to love them as actual and potential friends. It should be remembered too that mere *jivadaya* (kindness to animals) does not enable us to overcome the 'six deadly enemies' within us, namely lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and falsehood. Give me the man who has completely conquered self and is full of goodwill and love towards all, and is ruled by the law of love in all his actions, and I for one will offer him my respectful homage even though he be a meat-eater. On the other hand the *jivadaya* of a person who is steeped in anger and lust but daily

feeds the ants and insects and refrains from killing has hardly anything in it to recommend itself. It is a mechanical performance without any spiritual value. It may even be worse — a hypocritical screen for hiding the corruption within.

Sevagram, 9-9-40
Harijan, 15-9-1940

139

NON-VIOLENCE DURING RIOTS

A friend writes:

> "How can non-violence be efficacious during riots? By self-immolation we can influence only those with whom we have already established living contacts. But the hooligans who perpetrate violence during riots are, as a rule, hirelings imported from outside. How can they have any scruples about hurting those whom they have never known before and for whom they can have no regard or consideration?"

The question deserves careful consideration. The friend who has put it is a valiant worker who nearly lost his life in trying to do his duty during a riot. I have often written on this question before. The pity of it is that Congressmen have never seriously thought over the question of finding a non-violent way of quelling riots. Their non-violence was restricted to the sole purpose of offering civil resistance to the authorities. In my opinion the non-violence that goes so far and no further scarcely deserves the name '*ahimsa*'. You may, if you like, call it unarmed resistance. So far as it is a device for embarrassing the Government it is a species of *himsa*. To quell riots non-violently, there must be true *ahimsa* in one's heart, an *ahimsa* that takes even the erring hooligan in its warm embrace. Such an attitude cannot be cultivated. It can only come as a prolonged and patient effort which must be made during peaceful times. The would-be member of a peace brigade should come into close touch and cultivate acquaintance with the so-called *goonda* element in his vicinity. He should know all and be known to all and win the hearts of all by his living and selfless service. No section should be regarded as too contemptible or mean to mix

with. *Goondas* do not drop from the sky, nor do they spring from the earth like evil spirits. They are the product of social disorganization, and society is therefore responsible for their existence. In other words, they should be looked upon as a symptom of curruption in our body politic. To remove the disease we must first discover the underlying cause. To find the remedy will then be a comparatively easy task. So far we have not even attempted a proper beginning. But it is never too late to mend. It is enough that we are at last alive to the necessity of it. We have now to follow it up with prompt action. Let everyone who is interested make a prompt beginning in his own neighbourhood. The difficulty mentioned by my correspondent will automatically resolve itself, if we proceed with our effort in the right spirit.

Sevagram, 9-9-40
Harijan, 15-9-1940

140

SPEECH AT THE A. I. C. C.

[Here is the full text of Gandhiji's English speech at the A. I. C. C. meeting in Bombay on 15th September. It is revised by Gandhiji and is thus an authorised version. M.D.]

I know that you have listened to me with the greatest patience. I am specially grateful to you today, for the simple reason that I have said many things which may have displeased you. But it was never my intention to displease those whom I want to harness for the great work that lies before you and before me. I have to speak to you at length because I have to shoulder this burden. I have not come with a prepared speech at all. The thoughts will come as I proceed.

Let me begin with a thought which has been weighing with me for a considerable time. When the war broke out and I went to Simla to see the Viceroy, I issued a statement the next day, not in a representative but in my individual capacity. A friend has now reminded me how good it would have been if I had simply hung on to that statement although I could not take the Congress with me; and on the eve of my shouldering this respon-

sibility, he prayed that I should be guided by God to take up that original position and retire. I have very great regard for him. I have not forgotten that statement, nor have I any regret or apology to offer. If such a thing occurs—and history often repeats itself—and I happen to go to another Viceroy, I should make the same statement.

Although I spoke only for myself, deep down in me there was the Congressman speaking. The Viceroy also did not send for me because I was M. K. Gandhi. M. K. Gandhi has absolutely no place in his books. The man who wields the sceptre can have no room for individuals. He sent for me because he thought I would represent the Congress view and I would be able to carry conviction to Congressmen.

I withdrew from that position, not as an individual but as a Congressman, and because I failed to carry conviction even to a single Congressman. Happily you have got on the Working Committee men with sterling honesty who had the courage to tell me that, although it was my statement, they did not feel like accepting it. They added that they had had bitter experience behind them, and that therefore they would not be able to take that position. Thus you had the resolution that was passed by the Congress immediately after the war. And I agreed with the resolution as a representative, although I said to them that, if I could carry conviction, my original position was the best possible one to take up. If I had pressed the members of the Working Committee to accept my position, they would have done so, but it would have been only mechanical. The statement was not made to deceive the Viceroy or, for the matter of that, a single soul. It came straight from the heart. It was not a theatrical display. It was the opening up of the secret recesses of the heart before the world, the Viceroy and the Congress. If these words of mine could not find an echo in their hearts, they would have been of no use whatsoever to the Viceroy, to the great English nation or to India. That still remains my sentiment. If I could not convince the Congress of my attitude, it would not carry us further. It would have been a wrong step to take, and hence it was not taken. With that background I approach this resolution.

I have made repeated statements that I would not be guilty of embarrassing the British people or the British Government when their very existence hung in the balance, that I would not

be true to my *satyagraha*, would not be true to non-violence, would not be true to the truth which I hold dear if I did so, and therefore could not do so. That very man now stands before you to shoulder the burden of *satyagraha*. Why ? There comes a time when a man in his weakness mistakes vice for virtue; and virtue itself, when taken away from its context and from the purpose for which it was dedicated, becomes vice. I felt that, if I did not go to the assistance of the Congress and take the helm even if it be in fear and trembling, I would be untrue to myself.

I feel that in taking the step that we are doing we are rendering a great service not only to the Congress but to the whole of India. And we are rendering a service not only to the whole of India. History will record—and Englishmen will be able to grasp this statement some day—that we rendered help to the English nation, and they will find that we were true to our salt and had the same bravery and fearlessness of which the Englishman is proud and for which he is renowned. I, who claim to be a fast friend of the British people, will be guilty of unfriendly conduct if, under a false sense of modesty, or because people may think otherwise about me, or because Englishmen themselves will be angry with me, I do not issue a warning that the virtue of self-restraint now becomes vice, because it will kill the Congress organization, and it will kill the very spirit which is exercising this restraint.

When I say, I am speaking not only for the Congress, but for all who stand for national freedom—Muslims, Parsis, Christians and even those who are against the Congress, so long as they represent the aspiration of India, namely unadulterated independence. I should be untrue to all of them, if at this time I said, 'no embarrassment to the British'. I must not repeat parrot-like 'no embarrassment'. Then that repetition would be just as useful for my salvation or for the guarding of my virtue as the repetition by a parrot of God's name which cannot bring him salvation, because it is only a mechanical and vocal effort without any intelligence behind it. Therefore, if I exercise that suppression at this critical moment in the history of the nation, it would be useless. I should be perfectly untrue to myself if I hid myself in Sevagram and said, "No, I have told you, 'no embarrassment.'"

The language of this resolution is in the main mine. It

appealed to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. I used to be the Congress draftsman. Now he has taken my place. He saw it was inevitable, if we were to be true to non-violent resistance to the extent to which we wanted to go. The Working Committee has accepted this phraseology deliberately, well knowing its implications. The result is this: If we can get a declaration from the British Government that the Congress can carry on anti-war propaganda, and preach non-co-operation with the Government in their war effort, we will not have civil disobedience.

I do not want England to be defeated or humiliated. It hurts me to find St. Paul's Cathedral damaged. It hurts me as much as I would be hurt if I heard that the Kashi Vishvanath temple or the Juma Masjid was damaged. I would like to defend both the Kashi Vishvanath temple and the Juma Musjid and even St. Paul's with my life, but would not take a single life for their defence. That is my fundamental difference with the British people. My sympathy is there with them nevertheless. Let there be no mistake on the part of Englishmen, Congressmen, or others whom my voice reaches, as to where my sympathy lies. It is not because I love the British nation and hate the German. I do not think that the Germans as a nation are any worse than the English or the Italians are any worse. We are all tarred with the same brush; we are all members of the vast human family. I decline to draw any distinctions. I cannot claim any superiority for Indians. We have the same virtues and the same vices. Humanity is not divided into watertight compartments so that we cannot go from one to another. They may occupy one thousand rooms, but they are all related to one another. I would not say, 'India should be all in all, let the whole world perish.' That is not my message. India should be all in all, consistently with the well-being of other nations of the world. I can keep India intact and its freedom also intact only if I have goodwill towards the whole of the human family and not merely for the human family which inhabits this little spot of the earth called India. It is big enough compared to other smaller nations, but what is India in the wide world or in the universe?

Let there be no mistake as to what I am about. I want my individuality to remain unimpaired. If I lose it, I would be of no service to India, much less to the British people, still less

to humanity. My individual liberty is the same as the nation's, convertible with national liberty. I do not claim any greater liberty for myself. Hence my liberty is equal to the liberty of all of you and no greater. I feel that, if my liberty is at stake, yours is also at stake. I claim the liberty of going through the streets of Bombay and say that I shall have nothing to do with this war, because I do not believe in this war and in this fratricide that is going on in Europe. I admire the bravery. But what is the use of this bravery? I deplore the foolishness and the crass ignorance. These people do not know what they are fighting for. That is how I look at this war that is going on across the seas. I cannot possibly take part in it. Nor do I want the Congress to do so.

The part that I would like to take is the part of peacemaker. If the British people in their wisdom had recognized the independence not of the Congress but of all India, and if other parties in India had also co-operated with us, we would have taken the honourable place of peacemakers between these nations. Such is my ambition. But today I know that it is a day-dream. But sometimes a man lives in his day-dreams. I live in mine, and picture the world as full of good human beings —not goody goody human beings. In the Socialist's language, there will be a new structure of society, a new order of things. I am also aspiring after a new order of things that will astonish the world. If you try to dream these day-dreams, you will also feel exalted as I do.

And now I come to our 'tin-pot' Congress—tin-pot in the estimation of others, not my own. If we do not take care, the Congress will disappear, and if the Congress disappears, the national spirit disappears. One after another Congressmen are being selected and jailed. It is not *satyagraha* to watch people being taken away. It is much better for all of us to rush into the jaws of the opponent. After all, as the Maulana Saheb once said, India is a vast prison. Let us get out of this slave-prison by breaking the prison bars. He said to the Sikhs at the time of the Nankana Saheb tragedy: "You may protect one *gurudwara*: but what about vast *gurudwara* that is India? We have to deliver it from bondage." Those words ring true even today in my ears. If this liberty of the nation or the movement for freedom is likely to be choked, then I say that the virtue of self-

restraint is going to become a vice. That virtue of restraint cannot be carried to the extent of the extinction of the national spirit wherever it may reside, whether among Congressmen or non-Congressmen.

I do not want to hurl civil disobedience or anything in the face of the Government without making my meaning clear, the meaning I attach to the sum total of Government actions—actions beginning with the declaration of the Viceroy, the statement of the Secretary of State for India, and the series of actions and the policy that the Government have pursued since. The sum total of all these has left an indelible impression on my mind that there is something wrong, some injustice being perpetrated against the whole nation, and that the voice of freedom is about to be stifled. This is implied in the resolution, not in the exact language which I am using now, but you will see the meaning clear as daylight.

In order completely to clarify our position, I propose to approach the Viceroy with a request that he will be good enough to see me, and I have no doubt that he will. I will place my difficulties before him; I will place the Congress difficulties before him. I will approach him in your name. I will tell him that this is the position to which we have been reduced: We do not want to embarrass you and deflect you from your purpose in regard to war effort. We go our way, and you go yours, undeterred, the common ground being non-violence. If we carry the people with us, there will be no war effort on the part of our people. If, on the other hand, without your using any but moral pressure, you find that the people help the war effort, we can have no cause for grumbling. If you get assistance from the Princes, from the Zamindars, from anybody high or low, you can have it; but let our voice also be heard. If you accept my proposal, it will be eminently honourable, it will certainly be a feather in your cap. It will be honourable of you, although you are engaged in a life and death struggle, that you have given us this liberty. It will be honourable of you that you take this great step, although you have limitless powers to choke our voice; and that you give us the fullest possible freedom, consistently with the observance of non-violence, to tell the people of India not to join the war effort.

Let the people use any reasoning they like for refusal to help the war effort. My reasoning is the only one which will sit well on Congressmen's lips. But I do not expect all to restrict themselves to that reasoning. Those who have conscientious objection, as I have, will adopt my reasoning. Those who are tired of British imperialism will use that argument. There may be others who will have other arguments. All these should be covered under this freedom of speech, provided, however, that they all accept non-violence, provided also that what they say is said openly and not secretly. These are the implications of my generalship. If these do not satisfy you, you must reject this resolution summarily. So long as you can preach non-co-operation with war effort in men and money, there should be no civil disobedience. But if you have not that liberty, there is no Swaraj but perpetual bondage. I would like the British people and the Viceroy to be able to tell the world that they have given the leaders of the Indian people liberty to preach to their people what they like. The British can then say to the world : " Judge us by our conduct. Here in India we are playing the game."

I do not mind the British not responding to the Delhi resolution. They may say, " At the present moment you cannot interfere with the management of affairs as they stand. Deliverance will come to you in its own time. At this critical juncture do not worry us." I will understand that argument. I will sympathize with it. I will hold my hand so long as there is no fraud or falsity in what they say. It is impossible for them to give us freedom. If freedom has got to come, it must be obtained by our own internal strength, by our closing our ranks, by unity between all sections of the community. It cannot descend from heaven, nor can it be given as a gift from one nation to another. I do not know whether I am representing the feelings of the members of the Working Committee, because I have not discussed these things with them. But you have to take me with all my limitations, with the workings of my mind.

The Viceroy may say, "You are a visionary." I may fail in my mission, but we will not quarrel. If he says he is helpless, I will not feel helpless. I will make good my position. I cannot sit still when I see Ram Manohar Lohia and Jaiprakash Narain in jail, than whom I do not know braver or straighter men. They

have not preached violence, but simply carried out the behests of the Ramgarh resolution. It was a point of honour with them.

I have restrained myself, and will restrain myself. I will not seek imprisonment. I do not want to offer civil disobedience. I will not place myself in peril. In this battle I will not expose myself to imprisonment. But if the Government chooses, it will not be difficult to take me away. I will not be able to seal my lips or restrain my pen. It will be difficult for them to keep me in prison, not because India will rise in rebellion. India will be wrong, if it does so. My own instinct is that they will not be able to keep me in jail.

I will place my argument before the Viceroy. I may fail in my mission. But I have never approached a mission in despair. I may have approached it with the consciousness that I may be faced with a blind wall. But I have often penetrated blind walls. I shall approach the Viceroy in the confidence and hope that he will understand the great reasonableness of the request of the Congress for full liberty to preach 'no war' in India. Every one should have perfect liberty to preach by pen and tongue: 'We cannot aid imperialism, we cannot help spoliation.'

I shall strain every nerve to avoid *satyagraha* in your name. What shape it will take, when it comes, I do not know. But I know that there will be no mass civil disobedience, because mass civil disobedience is not required for this occasion. I have impenetrable darkness before me regarding the future course of action. I have no mysteries. I do not know how I shall lead you, what action I shall put before you. I hope that any action that we may take will be worthy of the Congress traditions and of the occasion.

I have often said that I do not know the Congress mind as I have buried myself in Sevagram. It is because of the Congress difficulty that I have dragged myself to Bombay, and immediately I am released from this duty you will find me in Sevagram. But I have got strength and resourcefulness enough to lead this battle, although I am buried in Sevagram. I shall do better and clearer thinking in Sevagram than anywhere else, simply because I have built up there an atmosphere for my growth. With the march of time my body must decay but, I hope, not my wisdom. I seem to see things more clearly with

the advance of age. It may be self-deception, but there is no hypocrisy. Self-deception is good sometimes in that it helps one to remain cheerful and not to give way to despair. It will be, therefore, wrong of you to drag me from Sevagram; and I promise that I shall give a good account of my stewardship.

There are many parties in the Congress. We are not all of the same opinion. There is indiscipline in the Congress. I know it is inevitable in a mass organization which is growing from day to day. If it is all indiscipline and no discipline, the organization is on the downward path. Let it not be said of you that you come to the Congress although you do not believe in non-violence. How can you possibly sign the Congress pledge with violence in your breasts? I want complete obedience to the policy of non-violence. While the policy lasts, it is the same as though it was a creed, for so long as it holds good it is as good as a creed. My creed holds me for life; yours so long as you hold it. Resign from the Congress, and you are free from it. Let us be clear regarding the language we use and the thoughts we nurture. For, what is language but the expression of thought? Let your thought be accurate and truthful, and you will hasten the advent of Swaraj even if the whole world is against you. You will have won Swaraj without having to spend nine million pounds a day or without burning a single home. If you are true to your policy, I am sure that without doing any of these things you will build up the majestic edifice of freedom.

Now for the violence party. Do not mix up the methods, if you can help it. You have restrained yourselves for some years. Restrain yourselves for some more years. Ours is not a small battle. If you restrain yourselves, you will lose nothing.

Freedom of speech and pen is the foundation of Swaraj. If the foundation-stone is in danger, you have to exert the whole of your might in order to defend that single stone. May God help you.

Harijan, 29-9-1940

141

I WAS UNJUST BECAUSE WEAK

I know Rajaji enough to understand that he is too brave to need any support from anybody; he is too philosophic to harbour an injury for many hours, if not minutes. I know also that his fine sense of humour enables him to enjoy a joke at his expense. Therefore this confession must be taken as one for my own satisfaction only.

I have told the public that, had I not egged him on, Rajaji would never have brought forward his resolution at New Delhi. Having great regard for his judgment and his honesty, when he asserted with amazing assurance that I was wrong and he was right in the implications and application of non-violence, I allowed myself to doubt the correctness of my interpretation to the point of allowing and encouraging him to act on his. I showed weakness and became unjust to him. A weak man is just by accident. A strong but non-violent man is unjust by accident. I was unjust to Rajaji because I exposed him to ridicule and unkind attacks. Though no ultimate harm has come to the Congress because what I still consider was an error has been rectified, it is not a good thing for a great leader to have his work undone all of a sudden, for I know that Rajaji still feels that he was right. If his view had prevailed, the resolution that now holds sway would not have taken the shape it has. I would still have been out of the Congress. For I was out of it at Wardha before the Delhi resolution was taken as the natural outcome of Wardha.

If I was unjust to Rajaji, I was also unjust to the Working Committee. For had I remained firm, the Wardha resolution too would not have been passed. I hold that, so long as I am accepted as the sole authority on *satyagraha* and its implications, they must not be a matter of vote. My colleagues may debate the pros and cons with me and try to convince me that their interpretation is right. If I cannot accept it, my judgement should prevail, because I am both the author of *satyagraha* and general in *satyagraha* action. The only way the colleagues can

avoid my judgment is by absolving me from guidance. They did in so many words at Wardha. But it is plain that the absolution was not what the world means. They were most unwilling to give me absolution. It was given because I wrung it from them. My weakness began at Wardha. When a serious crisis arose, I should have raised the issue of jurisdiction. It was outside the Working Committee's jurisdiction to decide upon the meaning and application of a matter which belonged to their expert who was their interpreter and executive officer.

I am aware that all the members of the Working Committee do not accept my opinion as to jurisdiction. The matter has not come up for decision. But before the Committee and I came to the resolution now before the country, I had made the confession I have now published for the sake of an esteemed co-worker.

It is my conviction that, owing to a series of fortunate combination of acts of the members at the last Wardha meeting, the present resolution was conceived, and we have been saved from a national disaster. We have come to a decision which, if Congressmen react to it as they should, must raise India to a position which it has never yet occupied, and brings it nearer to her goal as nothing else could have done.

Whether my estimate is right or wrong time alone can show. But this is merely by the way. Nor is the purpose of this confession to invite the reader to accept my judgment as to the jurisdiction of the Working Committee. The mention of it was relevant to show the nature of my error. It is unpardonable for a general to surrender his judgment to a fellow officer unless the conviction goes home to him that the latter *is* right — not *may be* right.

I hope I have given the public enough material to show that in all that Rajaji did he was throughout brave and correct. The incorrectness was due to me.

And I wish to say the same thing about his 'sporting offer'. It is no part of this confession to defend it. But so far as I can see, the offer was truly sporting, if the correctness of the Poona resolution be accepted. It should be remembered that the Muslim League is a great organization wielding influence upon the Muslims of India. The Congress has dealt with it before, and I have no doubt it will deal with it in future. However mistaken Quaid-e-Azam may be in our estimation, let us give him the

same credit for honesty of purpose as we claim for ourselves. When the war cloud is lifted and when India comes to her own, surely Congressmen would just as much welcome a Muslim, a Sikh, a Christian, or a Parsi as Premier, as they would a Hindu, and even a non-Congressman, no matter of what faith he may be. I am sure that Rajaji's 'sporting offer' meant no more and no less than this. When passions have died, critics will read his offer in its proper light. It is wrong to misjudge a public worker, and doubly so when he happens to be of Rajaji's calibre. He has lost nothing by the misjudgment. But a nation may easily harm itself by misjudging its true servants and denying itself their services. Above all, when the Congress may have to embark upon a great non-violent struggle for fundamental liberty, it behoves Congressmen to guard against harsh, hasty and uncharitable judgments.

On the train to Wardha, 18-9-40
Harijan, 22-9-1940

142

SOME CRITICISM ANSWERED

The recent resolution of the A. I. C. C. and my speeches before the meeting have come in for much criticism, if they have earned some praise. Of the criticism there are two items which I must attempt to answer. For they are of permanent interest. *The Times of India* of the 17th inst. in its temperate criticism takes me to task for my statement that 'the peoples of Europe do not know what they are fighting for'. It was bound to be resented. But truth, though seemingly harsh, has to be uttered when utterance becomes relevant, indeed imperative. I believe that the utterance had become overdue. I must say why I think that the warring nations do not know what they are fighting for. I had used the expression 'warring nations', not 'peoples of Europe'. This is not a distinction without a difference. I have distinguished between the nations and their leaders. The leaders of course know what they are fighting for. I make no admission that they are right. But neither the

English nor the Germans nor the Italians know what they are fighting for except that they trust their leaders and therefore follow them. I submit that this is not enough when the stake is so bloody and staggering as during the present war. It is perhaps common cause that Germans and Italians do not know why English children should be slaughtered in cold blood and beautiful English homes should be destroyed. But *The Times*' claim probably is that the British *people* know what they are fighting for. When I asked the British soldiers in South Africa during the Boer War they could not tell me what they were fighting for. 'Theirs' was surely 'not to reason why'. They did not even know where they were being marched to. The British people would not be able to give me a more satisfying answer, if I happened to be in London and asked them why their soldiers were working havoc in Berlin. If the Press accounts are to be relied upon, British skill and valour have wrought more havoc in Berlin than have the Germans in London. What wrong have the German people done to the British people? Their leaders have. Hang them by all means, but why destroy German homes and German civilian life? What difference does it make to the dead, the orphans and the homeless, whether the mad destruction is wrought under the name of totalitarianism or the holy name of liberty or democracy? I assert in all humility, but with all the strength at my command, that liberty and democracy become unholy when their hands are dyed red with innocent blood. I hear the living Christ saying: "These so-called children of mine know not what they are doing. They take my Father's name in vain, for they disobey the central command of my Father!" If my ears do not deceive, I have erred in good company, if I have erred at all.

And why have I uttered the truth? Because I am confident that God has made me the instrument of showing the better way. If Britain seeks justice, she must appear before the imperial court of God with clean hands. She will not defend liberty and democracy by following totalitarian methods so far as war is concerned. She will not be able to retrace her steps after out-Hitlering Hitler in war. The last war is a resounding lesson. Her victory, if attained, will be a snare and a delusion. I know mine is a voice in the wilderness. But it will some day ring true. If liberty and democracy are to be truly saved, they

will only be by non-violent resistance no less brave, no less glorious, than violent resistance. And it will be infinitely braver and more glorious because it will give life without taking any.

Now I come to *The Statesman's* article of 18th September. I am sorry to say it is intemperate and written in anger. It is full of palpable mistakes (to use a mild word), no doubt unconscious. But I am not concerned with the intemperance of language. In the fierce heat of battle unknown before, the wonder is that the intemperance one sees sometimes is not much greater than it is.

Here is the cream of the heavy indictment :

> "We have often expressed our view about the fundamental immorality and contradictory character of the doctrine. Non-co-operation is a method of war and not of peace.... It carries with it a pretentious claim to spiritual value which involves sanctimonious insincerities and mass hypocrisy masking intensified hatreds. . . . A nation which accepted this doctrine would doom itself to slavery."

This is all contrary to the history of our own times in India. I claim that there is nothing immoral in non-violent non-co-operation. Violent resistance is itself non-co-operation, and it is immoral because of its violence. It becomes moral when it is non-violent. Non-co-operation with evil is a sacred duty. It is essentially spiritual because of its non-violent character. The adjectives used by the writer would be deserved, if it was non-violent in name only. For the present argument I must take the genuine article. Now for the facts. Non-violent non-co-operation, however imperfect it was, has redeemed India at least somewhat from the slavery under which she was groaning. It has raised India from the slough of despond, and has brought her prestige which nothing else could have. I make bold to say that, if the non-violence offered had been not adulterated, its effect would have been still more visible. My greatest claim, however, is that it is this despised non-violent resistance which hitherto saved India from anarchy and red ruin. It is not yet entirely saved. If it is to be saved, it will only be by the non-violent method. I invite *The Statesman* writer to test the truth of my statement. He will have many infallible proofs in its

support. A dispassionate study will enable him to serve both Britain and India.

On the way to Simla, 25-9-40
Harijan, 29-9-1940

143

VICEROY-GANDHI CORRESPONDENCE

The correspondence that passed today between the Viceroy and Gandhiji on the Congress demand for freedom of speech has been released to the Press (Simla, September 30) :

Viceroy's Letter

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

I think it will be convenient if I record very briefly in writing the origin of the talks we have had on the 27th and 30th September and their outcome.

As you will remember, you wrote to me on the 18th September to ask that I should grant you an interview, and you explained in your letter that you were anxious to discuss the situation covered by the recent resolution of the All-India Congress Committee, not only in your capacity as guide of the Congress but as a personal friend. I was, I need not say, most ready to talk things over with you, and we have now had the advantage of two conversations.

In the course of these conversations the situation has been exhaustively discussed, with particular reference to the question of free speech in time of war. On that matter, while professing yourself most anxious to avoid in any way embarrassing His Majesty's Government in the prosecution of the war, you made it clear to me that you regarded it as essential that the Indian National Congress and other members of the public should be in a position to give full expression to their views in relation to the war effort, provided only that such expression was fully non-violent.

I indicated to you the nature of the special treatment laid down by law in the United Kingdom for dealing with conscientious objector — which I may broadly describe as an arrangement

under which, while the conscientious objector is absolved from the duty of fighting and is allowed even to profess his faith in public, he is not permitted to carry his opposition to the length of endeavouring to persuade others, whether soldiers or munition workers, to abandon their allegiance or to discontinue their effort.

You made it clear to me that you would not regard treatment of that nature as adequate in the conditions of India, and that you regarded it as essential that in India, where in your judgment conditions were wholly different from those existing in Great Britain, the Indian objector, either to all war as such, or to the participation of India in the present war, should be untrammelled in the expression of his views.

It emerged further from our conversation that, while you would not yourself preach to workers engaged on war work at the actual works, in an endeavour there to dissuade them from working on war equipment, you would regard it as essential that it should be open to Congressmen and non-Congressmen alike to deliver addresses and otherwise to call upon people throughout the country to refrain from assisting India's war effort in any way which would involve India's participation in bloodshed.

I listened with the utmost care and attention to your argument, and our examination of the situation has been full and close. I felt bound, however, in the outcome, to make it clear to you that action such as you suggest would certainly amount not only to the inhibition of India's war effort, but to that embarrassment of Great Britain in the prosecution of the war which the Congress state that they are anxious to avoid; and that it would clearly not be possible in the interests of India herself, more particularly at this most critical juncture in the war, to acquiesce in the interference with the war effort which would be involved in freedom of speech so wide as that for which you had asked.

Gandhiji's Reply

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

I have your letter of even date. It fairly sets forth the Congress position as I placed it before you. It is a matter of deep regret to me that the Government have not been able to

appreciate the Congress position, meant just to satisfy the bare requirements of the people, whether Congressmen or others, who felt a conscientious objection to helping a war to which they were never invited and which they regard, so far as they are concerned, as one for saving Imperialism, of which India is the greatest victim. Their objection is just as conscientious as mine as a war resister. I cannot claim greater freedom for my conscience than for that of those I have named.

As I made it plain in the course of our talks, the Congress is as much opposed to victory for Nazism as any Britisher can be. But their objection cannot be carried to the extent of their participation in the war. And since you and the Secretary of State for India have declared that the whole of India is voluntarily helping the war effort, it becomes necessary to make clear that the vast majority of the people of India are not interested in it. They make no distinction between Nazism and the double autocracy that rules India. Had His Majesty's Government recognized the freedom required in the special condition of India, they would have justified the claim that they were receiving from India only such effort as they could voluntarily. The war party and the no-war party would have been placed on an equal footing so far each worked fully non-violently.

As to the last paragraph of your letter, I wish to remind you that it was never contemplated to carry non-embarrassment to the point of self-extinction or, in other words, stopping all national activities which were designed to make India peace-minded and show that India's participation could not benefit anyone, not excluding Great Britain. Indeed I hold that, if India were left free to make her choice which freedom of speech implied, India would probably have turned the scales in favour of Britain and true liberty by the moral prestige which Britain would have then gained.

I must, therefore, repeat that the Congress does still want to refrain from embarrassing the British Government in their war effort. But it is impossible for the Congress to make of the policy a fetish by denying its creed at this critical period in the history of mankind. If the Congress has to die, it should do so in the act of proclaiming its faith. It is unfortunate that we have not been able to arrive at an agreement on the single issue of freedom of speech. But I shall hug the hope that it will be

possible for the Government to work out their policy in the spirit of the Congress position.

I should like to touch upon the other points I raised in our talks. But for fear of burdening this reply, I refrain. I shall hope to make a public statement on them as early as I can.

In conclusion, let me thank you publicly for the great courtesy and patience with which you listened to my very long statement and argument. And though our ways seem to diverge for the moment, our personal friendship will, as you have kindly said at the time of saying farewell, bear the strain of divergence.

As arranged I am handing our correspondence to the Press for publication.

Harijan, 6-10-1940

144

SINDH HINDUS

Shri Shamlal Gidwani writes a letter on the situation in Sindh from which I quote the following:

> "Most of us Sindh Hindus have not been able to follow the advice you thought fit to tender regarding non-violence. We find that this advice is in direct conflict with the teachings of Lord Shri Krishna. We have also been advised by you to migrate somewhere else if we are not able to protect ourselves. This advice again we are unable to follow for practical reasons.
>
> You know several of the reasons, and you have yourself mentioned some of them in your recent article in *Harijan* which we all greatly appreciate. You also know that Hindus in Sindh, though only 27 per cent of the population, own fifty per cent of the land. We are scattered all over the province, and our population in some of the villages is between two to ten per cent. We pay nearly the whole of the income-tax revenue in the province; we contribute fifty per cent of land revenue and nearly the whole of the customs revenue. If we follow your advice, we shall be not only cowards but become landless and countryless. There is also a danger in our migrating to other provinces, for it will mean a public confession of the failure of a community to protect itself merely because an aggressive community thought fit to tyrannize over us and the protecting arms of law and order were not made available for us. That

would again be a confession of the failure of democracy. On the other hand, what we feel is that, if you had advised the people of Sindh — particularly the Hindus — to train themselves in the use of arms, they would have been able to better protect themselves and would have been saved all the series of murders that had been wantonly committed on the Hindus in recent months."

At the same time that I received this letter, I saw in the papers that five Hindus were shot dead openly while they were pursuing their normal business. As usual the murderers have not been traced. Is this a plan of terrorism to drive the Hindus out of Sindh, or is it something else? Someone in Sindh ought to be able to answer the question.

Shri Gidwani does not subscribe to non-violence. He thinks that my advice is contrary to the teachings of Lord Krishna. He thinks, for (for himself) very good reasons, that the Hindus cannot act non-violently. For equally good reasons he thinks they cannot migrate. But he would like me to advise them to defend themselves by arms. This is like asking a nature cure physician to prescribe allopathic drugs. Can he be trusted to prescribe the right drugs? And what will my advice be worth when my own hands are incapable of wielding arms? Shri Gidwani should go to a physician who knows the business and will, on due occasion, run to the rescue and always be ready to give the necessary training. I have said that for those who do not believe in non-violence armed defence is the only remedy. But if I am asked to advise how it can be done, I can only say, "I do not know."

But Shri Gidwani is trifling with the crisis when he lazily looks up to me to guide Sindh Hindus on impossible terms. If he sincerely believes in the solution he has proposed, he must himself take the training at once and lead the terrified Hindus of Sindh along the path of armed defence. It is wrong for the leaders of Sindh to look for outside help. They should cease to write. They should seriously think out a plan of action, violent or non-violent, and follow it up firmly and bravely.

I venture also to suggest to the responsible Muslims of Sindh that their reputation is at stake. If they cannot stop those senseless murders of innocent people, history will find them guilty. They will never persuade anybody that they are helpless to deal with the mischief. Such acts are impossible

without the silent sympathy of the society to which the perpetrators of murders belong.

Simla 28-9-40
Harijan, 6-10-1940

145

A BRITISH ENDORSEMENT

Mr. Stephen J. Thorne, Secretary to the Society of Friends, sends me the following letter :

> "We, a group of Friends, want to send you our deep gratitude for your impressive appeal to every Briton to adopt the way of non-violence and bring about a cessation of hostilities. We drew together immediately on receiving the short version of your statement, and were later able to obtain a fuller text.
>
> You have received through the Viceroy the response of the British Government to your proffer of help, a response that, from your knowledge of the situation, you will easily understand. To most Britons the call to throw down their arms in a moment of supreme national peril and in face of imminent aggression is indistinguishable from cowardice and treason; it is an invitation to save their lives by the surrender of principles of liberty and justice that are dearer than life itself. But to those of us who in the peace movement share your faith in non-violence, you present a tremendous challenge. Few of us are fully prepared to stand up to it; and we are conscious of our own failure to convince our fellow countrymen of the value and practicability of this 'more excellent Way'. The technique of non-violent resistance as you have practised it is little understood in the West; especially in its positive and reconciling sense; and for that reason, apart from any other, your appeal has not yet met with any wide response.
>
> Though the British Government's reply must have been disappointing, we are anxious to make full use of your offered help. Your appeal gave expression to a spirit that is moving, we are certain, in the hearts of men all over the world. We believe that it would be a step forward if you were willing to address a further message to certain of the spiritual leaders of the world, urging them to act together in taking hold of the situation before the winter brings fresh disaster.

We hope you will maintain the closest contact with us, sending direct the full text of anything you may say in the days ahead.

Your friends sincerely,

Horace G. Alexander	Percy W. Bartlett
Anna Bidder	W. Maude Brayshaw
Robert Davis	A. Ruth Fry
Carl Heath	Elizabeth Fox Howard
James H. Hudson	Francis E. Pollard
J. Cuthbert Wigham	Alexander C. Wilson

P.S. The Council of Christian Pacifist Groups associates itself with this letter, and looks forward to an early opportunity of discussing the deep issues involved."

I am thankful to the signatories for their support of my appeal. I can assure them that immediately I see the psychological moment I shall act up to the signatories' expectation that I should address the spiritual leaders of the world. It is quite evident that the very thoroughness of the Nazi method makes them think that nothing but counter-violence can check the terror. I have suggested that counter-violence can only result in further brutalization of human nature. Drastic diseases require drastic remedies. In this instance nothing but non-violence can cure Nazi violence.

Sevagram, 16-10-40
Harijan, 20-10-1940

PEACE ORGANIZATION

If the Congress were an organization with a military bias, there is no doubt that today it would be a full-fledged military unit, every member becoming trained to be an efficient soldier. Fortunately for India and humanity, the Congress is not such an organization. No other purely national organization is or can be in the India of today. Fortunately again for India and humanity, the Congress has pledged itself since 1920 to win India's freedom through non-violent means. But up to now it has been largely a debating society, offering civil disobedience at intervals and all the time only playing with its vital programme of construction. At one time every Congressman was expected to create something for the nation. He or she was to spin for the nation. Congressmen would not respond, and the clause about spinning was dropped. There were other items too which every Congressman was to work. But he has not done so to the extent expected. The moment has now come for him to make a definite choice. The only programme before him is to become a servant or soldier of peace. A soldier of peace, unlike the one of the sword, has to give all his spare time to the promotion of peace alike in war time as in peace time. His work in peace time is both a measure of prevention of, as also that of preparation for, war time.

If then I was a Congressman with a vote, I would vote, as an emergency measure, for requiring every Congressman now on the Congress register or to come hereafter to possess the minimum qualifications for working the constructive programme. It would be wrong to remind me that the Congress should retain its democratic character. It will not lose it because, of its own motion, it becomes an efficient working body which anybody undertaking to obey its discipline and conditions of membership may join. The Congress will cease to be popular, if it cannot deserve popularity in times of stress. If it cannot provide work for the workless and hungry, if it cannot protect the people from depredations or teach them how to face them,

if it cannot help them in the face of danger, it will lose its prestige and popularity. No person or corporation can live long on his or its capital. The latter has to circulate and multiply itself.

The Congress has become popular because it has been foremost in fighting imperialism. Today the old way is of no avail. Nobody thinks of mass revolt at the present moment. The best, quickest, and most efficient way is to build up from the bottom. The psychological moment has come. "Back to the villages!" has become a necessity from every point of view. Now is the time to decentralize production and distribution. Every village has to become a self-sufficient republic. This does not require brave resolutions. It requires brave, corporate, intelligent work. As far as I know at the present moment this is common ground between the rulers and the people.

Let every Congressman answer for himself whether he will be a soldier or servant of peace or whether he will become a nonentity unwilling to take his place in building up Swaraj.

On train Bardoli-Wardha, 9-1-42
Harijan, 18-1-1942

147

REAL WAR EFFORT

The greatest need of the immediate present is to feed the hungry and clothe the naked. There is already scarcity in the land both of food and clothing. As the war progresses, both the scarcities must increase. There are no imports from outside, either of food-stuff or of cloth. The well-to-do may not feel the pinch as yet or at all, but the poor are feeling it now. The well-to-do live on the poor. There is no other way. What is then their duty? He who saves gains as much, that is to say he produces as much. Hence those who feel for the poor, those who would be one with them must curtail their wants. There are many ways. I shall only mention some here. There is much, too much food eaten and wasted by the well-to-do.

Use one grain at a time. Chapati, rice, and pulses, milk, ghee, *gud*, and oil are used in ordinary house-holds besides vegetables and fruit. I regard this as an unhealthy combination. Those who get animal protein in the shape of milk, cheese, eggs or meat need not use pulses at all. The poor people get only vegetable protein. If the well-to-do give up pulses and oils, they set free those two essentials for the poor who get neither animal protein nor animal fat. Then the grain eaten should not be sloppy. Half the quantity suffices when it is eaten dry and not dipped in any gravy. It is well to eat it with raw salads such as onion, carrot, radish, salad leaves, tomatoes. An ounce or two of salads serves the purpose of eight ounces of cooked vegetables. Chapatis or bread should not be eaten with milk. To begin with, one meal may be raw vegetables and chapati or bread, and the other cooked vegetables with milk or curds.

Sweet dishes should be eliminated altogether. Instead *gud* or sugar in small quantities may be taken with milk or bread or by itself.

Fresh fruit is good to eat, but only a little is necessary to give tone to the system. It is an expensive article, and an over-indulgence by the well-to-do has deprived the poor and the ailing of an article which they need much more than the well-to-do.

Any medical man who has studied the science of dietetics will certify that what I have suggested can do no harm to the body, on the contrary it must conduce to better health.

This is only one way of saving food-stuff. It is obvious. But by itself it cannot produce much visible effect.

Grain-dealers have to shed their greed and the habit of making as much profit as possible. They must be satisfied with as little as possible. They run the risk of being looted, if they do not gain the credit of being keepers of grain for the sake of the poor. They should be in touch with the people in their neighbourhood. Congressmen have to visit grain-dealers within their beat and give them the message of the time.

By far the most important part of the work consists in educating the villagers to keep what they have and to induce cultivation of fresh crops wherever water is available. This requires widespread and intelligent propaganda. It is not generally known that bananas, potatoes, beetroot, yam and *suran* and in a measure pumpkin are a food crop easily grown. They can take the place of bread in time of need.

There is too scarcity of money. There may be grain available but no money to buy it with. There is no money because there is no employment. This has to be found. Spinning is the readiest and the handiest. But local needs may supply other sources of labour. Every available source has to be tapped so that there is no want of employment. Only the lazy ones need and must starve. Patient handling will induce even this class to shed their laziness.

The problem of clothing is much easier than feeding, if it is handled well in time. The mills may not be relied on in these times. There is ample cotton to be had in India. It is a problem for cotton cultivators how to dispose of their stock. The outside market is closed to them. Our mills cannot absorb the whole of the crop. It can be utilized, if the nation takes to spinning not for wages but for the sake of clothing the naked. Of course those who need employment will spin for profit. This number must be limited. They need organizing. Much money will be needed for the purpose. But national spinning does not need so much organizing. Profit motive being eliminated and willingness being assumed, organization is reduced to simplest terms.

This is no time for multiplying wheels. They take time to manufacture. Raw material is daily becoming dearer. Wheels cannot be manufactured everywhere. Places where they are can be counted by the fingers of one hand.

Therefore I suggest the plying of the *dhanush takli* and even the simple *takli*. The former should be manufactured locally. Indeed it is difficult to manufacture the simple *takli* at once in lakhs. The *dhanush takli* is the only thing which can be the easiest manufactured. Slivers cannot be supplied to spinners. Each one should get some cotton for himself or herself, and card it as well as may be with the hand or with a home-made small bow such as the children in the Bihar basic schools have. All this can be done because no one is expected to manufacture a large quantity of yarn. If every one of our available millions span for one hour daily, there would be enough yarn to keep every handloom going. The reader should know that there are lakhs of hand-loom weavers in the land. There is danger of their starving for want of yarn.

Here is a great task for every Congressman to undertake. He has to become a good spinner and carder and know how to manufacture the *dhanush takli*. Let every Congressman begin with himself and his family and neighbours, and he will find that the life-giving contagion spreads like wild fire which envelops you before you hardly know what you are witnessing.

Any organization that tackles these two problems successfully will command the love and confidence of the people. I hope that all will join in this real war effort. It is none the less effective because it is peaceful and constructive.

Will the Princes let their people do this work without let or hindrance ? Will Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah allow the members of the Muslim League to co-operate with the Congress workers in this truly national but non-political work which is also humanitarian ? There are 23,000 Muslim spinners, carders and weavers earning their daily bread through the A. I. S. A.

On the way to Kashi, 19-1-42
Harijan, 25-1-1942

148

A DEPLORABLE INCIDENT

As Sardar Vallabhbhai was leaving Sevagram the other day he told me of a dacoity in a home in Kheda District. Armed dacoits entered the house, belaboured the inmates, and escaped with the loot. The story was heart-rending. What should I do under similar circumstances, I thought to myself. What should Congressmen do in the circumstances was the next thought; and since then the train of thought arising from the dacoity has taken possession of me. The Congress has been working continuously since 1920 under the policy of non-violence. The province of Gujarat has also had the advantage of a leader of the Sardar's calibre. And yet daring dacoities can take place. How far then can Congress influence be said to have penetrated? People imagine that, if the British Government were to cease to function today, it would be the non-violent Congressmen who would automatically take over. But it is not so. I have been working to this end for the last twenty years, but my dream has not materialized. For the Congress has not had a living faith in the very means which it adopted in 1920. Therefore the non-violence of the Congress has really been non-violence of the weak. But governments can only be run by the strong. And a non-violent government can only be run by those who believe that non-violence is the mightiest force on earth. If we had had this strength, there would be no Hindu-Muslim riots, there would be no robbers or dacoits. Some might say that for such strength you need either a Jesus or a Buddha. But this is not so. Neither Jesus nor Buddha tried non-violence in the political sphere, or it would be truer to say that the present day type of politics did not exist in their day. The Congress experiment is, therefore, a new one. The tragedy is that Congressmen have not tried it with full faith, full understanding and sincerity. If they had had these three essential qualities, the Congress would today have been far taller than it is. But I may not cry over spilt milk. I refer to the past only in order to guide us in the present. Even if we wake up now, the game is ours; if we do not, we shall surely lose. Power invariably

elects to go into the hands of the strong. That strength may be physical or of the heart, or, if we do not fight shy of the word, of the spirit. Strength of the heart connotes soul force. If today we decide that we should try to get power by force of arms, we shall have to undo all the work of twenty years among the masses. We shall have to spend a considerable time in giving people a contrary training. We cannot afford to give the required time at this critical juncture. It is certain that today whoever has any strength of any kind will use it for seizing power. It is my firm conviction that, if Congressmen are to get power, it should only be through non-violence or soul force.

We have neither time nor material to do new work even in this line. When we have so far employed non-violence as a weapon of the weak, how can we all of a sudden expect to convert it into a weapon of the strong? But in spite of this I feel that at the present moment this experiment alone is feasible and proper for us. There is no risk involved in it. Even failure in it takes the form of success because, even if the people are not able to go the whole length in the experiment, they cannot possibly be led into a ditch. By following the way of physical force they may not only be proved cowards, but in attempting to follow an untrodden path thousands may also be destroyed.

It is then the duty of Congressmen to seek out dacoits and robbers. They should try to understand and convert them. Such workers cannot be had for the asking; but Congressmen should know that this work is just as important as it is fraught with risk, and a certain number of them have to devote themselves to it.

The second thing requisite is that we should prepare such workers as would, under difficult circumstances, stand up to dacoits and, whilst trying to check or convert them from their evil ways, be prepared to suffer hurt or even death. Perhaps few workers will be forthcoming for this task too, but peace brigades throughout the country are a definite necessity. Or else in times of chaos Congressmen will lose all the reputation they have so far gained.

Thirdly, the rich should ponder well as to what is their duty today. They who employ mercenaries to guard their wealth may find those very guardians turning on them. The moneyed classes have got to learn how to fight either with arms

or with the weapon of non-violence. For those who wish to follow the latter way the best and most effective *mantram* is: तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा: (Enjoy thy wealth by renouncing it). Expanded it means: "Earn your crores by all means. But understand that your wealth is not yours; it belongs to the people. Take what you require for your legitimate needs, and use the remainder for society." This truth has hitherto not been acted upon; but, if the moneyed classes do not even act on it in these times of stress, they will remain the slaves of their riches and passions and consequently of those who overpower them.

But I have visions that the end of this war will mean also the end of the rule of capital. I see coming the day of the rule of the poor, whether that rule be through force of arms or of non-violence. Let it be remembered that physical force is transitory even as the body is transitory. But the power of the spirit is permanent, even as the spirit is everlasting.

Sevagram, 25-1-42
Harijan, 1-2-1942

149

"SUPPOSE GERMANY WINS"

> "Suppose Germany wins with India not having entered the war, would Hitler leave India alone? Certainly not, my dear Mr. Gandhi, he will have a greater say in India than what Britain has now. The difference is this. You can fight the Englishman, but you cannot fight the German once he puts his foot on India's soil. Civil Disobedience is the terror of the Englishman, it is the daily bread of the Nazi."

This is a question extracted from a very long and earnest letter from an English correspondent from South Africa. The first fallacy is that India is assumed not to have entered the war when to all intents and purposes she is in the war in spite of the powerful protest of the Congress. She is so much in the war that Great Britain is effectively using all the available fighting material which her generals have brought into being and trained, and is draining all the money she can. Politically-minded Indians have never been trained except for doing the

rulers' clerical work. They are certainly holding themselves aloof until certain obviously necessary conditions are fulfilled. I do not see how they can be blamed for demanding the very liberty in defence of which the Allied Powers are said to be fighting. What Indians can do even if their demand is accepted is to give their moral weight to the struggle. This the rulers evidently do not care for. It cannot, in their opinion, turn the scales in their favour. Moral values do not count when each party swears by its material and physical resources. The Congress, with all the will in the world to defeat Nazism, cannot thrust its help on Great Britain which evidently it does not want or about which it is at least indifferent. If, therefore, Great Britain suffers defeat, it will not be for want of Congress co-operation but for causes over which the Congress can have no control.

If the Nazis come to India, the Congress will give them the same fight that it has given Great Britain. I do not underrate the power of *satyagraha* as the questioner does. But that is pure speculation. Imperialism has kept its grip on India for more than 150 years. If it is overthrown by a worse type of rule, the Congress can have the negative satisfaction of knowing that no other 'ism' can possibly last beyond a few years even if it establishes a foothold in India. That is as I read the Congress mind. Personally I think the end of this giant war will be what happened in the fabled Mahabharata War. The Mahabharata has been aptly described by a Travancorin as the Permanent History of Man. What is described in that great epic is happening today before our very eyes. The warring nations are destroying themselves with such fury and ferocity that the end will be mutual exhaustion. The victor will share the fate that awaited the surviving Pandavas. The mighty warrior Arjuna was looted in broad daylight by a petty robber. And out of this holocaust must arise a new order for which the exploited millions of toilers have so long thirsted. The prayers of peace-lovers cannot go in vain. *Satyagraha* is itself an unmistakable mute prayer of an agonized soul.

Sevagram, 10-2-42
Harijan, 15-2-1942

150
PLEA FOR CALMNESS

The recent British reverses ought not to create panic in the land. In all the wars that Britain has fought or in which she has been engaged there have been reverses some of which may be considered disastrous. But the British have a knack of surviving them and turning them into stepping-stones to success. Hence the saying peculiar to them that they blunder through to success. Failures do not dismay or demoralize them. They take them with calmness and in a sportsmanlike spirit. Wars are for them a national game like football. The defeated team heartily congratulates the successful one almost as if it was a joint victory, and drowns the sorrow of defeat in an exchange of glasses of whisky. If we have learnt nothing worth from the contact with the British, let us at least learn their calmness in the face of misfortunes.

And is there the slightest cause for alarm? Certainly not for those who believe in non-violence. For fear and distrust of self are no part of their composition, nor are they part of a panoplied soldier. The attribute of non-violence is perhaps only a copy book maxim. We do not see it in actual practice in any measure. But this war is abundant proof that neither party though steeped in violence betrays any fear or distrust. I am filled with amazement and admiration at the reckless bravery displayed by combatants on either side. This war is demonstration of the unthinkable nerve that human beings are capable of possessing. Looked at from either standpoint, therefore, we should be ashamed of fear, distrust and nervelessness in the face of danger. It is, therefore, the sacred duty of every worker to steel himself against cowardly panic and prevent its spread as far as he can. "Cowards die many times before their death." Let this not be proved of us.

The true danger exists only for cities. It may be very near due to the fall of Singapore and probable loss of Burma. One of the best precautions consists in those people who are not wanted in the cities or those who want to shun danger, migrat-

ing to the villages in an orderly manner. There should be no panicky rush. Those who must remain in the cities whether for business or otherwise should carry out instructions that may be issued by the authorities from time to time. Those who will not, for any reason whatsoever, should clear out in good time. If this simple precaution is taken, we may face the future without perturbation. More I cannot say, for we are a house divided against itself and there is no living bond between the rulers and the ruled. It is tragic but it is true. The tragedy is deepened by the knowledge that all parties feel so helpless.

On the train to Calcutta, 17-2-42
Harijan, 22-2-1942

151
CRIMINAL ASSAULTS

The whole world is on trial today. No one can escape from the war. Whilst the Ramayana and the Mahabharata are products of poets' imagination, their authors were not mere rhymsters. They were seers. What they depicted is happening before our very eyes today. Ravanas are warring with each other. They are showing matchless strength. They throw their deadly weapons from the air. No deed of bravery in the battlefield is beyond their capacity or imagination.

Man would not fight in this manner, certainly not the gods. Only brutes can. Soldiers drunk with the pride of physical strength loot shops and are not even ashamed to take liberties with women. The administration is powerless in war time to prevent such happenings. The army fulfils their primary need, and they wink the eye at their misdeeds. Where a whole nation is militarized the way of military life becomes part and parcel of its civilization. Therefore a soldier's taking such liberties is not a matter for condemnation. But it would take generations for India to become so.

Hence arise questions like the following which a sister sends me:

"(1) If a soldier commits an assault on a woman, can she be said to have lost her virtue?

(2) Is such a woman to be condemned and ostracized by society ?

(3) What should women and the public do under such circumstances ? "

Whilst the woman has in point of fact lost her virtue, the loss cannot in any way render her liable to be condemned or treated as an outcast. She is entitled to our sympathy for she has been cruelly injured, and we should tend her wounds as we would those of any injured person.

A woman is worthy of condemnation only when she is a willing party to her dishonour. In no case are adultery and criminal assault synonymous terms. If we were to view the matter in this light, we would not hide such instances as has thus far been our wont. Public opinion against such conduct on the part of men towards women would then be created and freely exercised.

If the Press carried on a sustained agitation, soldiers White or Brown would probably cease to behave in this manner. Their officers would be compelled to prevent such misbehaviour.

My advice to women is that they should leave the cities and migrate to the villages where a wide field of service awaits them. There is comparatively little risk of their being assaulted in villages. They must, however, live simple lives and make themselves one with the poor. If they will display their wealth by dressing in silks and satins and wearing jewellery, they will, in running away from one danger, expose themselves to a double. Naturally the advice cannot refer to those whom duty compels to live in cities.

The main thing, however, is for women to know how to be fearless. It is my firm conviction that a fearless woman who knows that her purity is her best shield can never be dishonoured. However beastly the man, he will bow in shame before the flame of her dazzling purity. There are examples even in modern times of women who have thus defended themselves. I can, as I write, recall two such instances. I therefore recommend women who read this article to try to cultivate this courage. They will become wholly fearless, if they can and cease to tremble as they do today at the mere thought of assaults. It is not, however, necessary for a woman to go through a bitter experience for the sake of passing a test of courage.

These experiences mercifully do not come in the way of lakhs or even thousands. Every soldier is not a beast. It is a minority that loses all sense of decency. Only twenty per cent of snakes are poisonous, and out of these a few only bite. They do not attack unless trodden on. But this knowledge does not help those who are full of fear and tremble at the sight of a snake. Parents and husbands should, therefore, instruct women in the art of becoming fearless. It can best be learnt from a living faith in God. Though He is invisible, He is one's unfailing protector. He who has this faith is the most fearless of all.

But such faith or courage cannot be acquired in a day. Meantime we must try to explore other means. When a woman is assaulted she may not stop to think in terms of *himsa* or *ahimsa*. Her primary duty is self-protection. She is at liberty to employ every method or means that come to her mind in order to defend her honour. God has given her nails and teeth. She must use them with all her strength and, if need be, die in the effort. The man or woman who has shed all fear of death will be able not only to protect himself or herself but others also through laying down his life. In truth we fear death most, and hence we ultimately submit to superior physical force. Some will bend the knee to the invader, some will resort to bribery, some will crawl on their bellies or submit to other forms of humiliation, and some women will even give their bodies rather than die. I have not written this in a carping spirit. I am only illustrating human nature. Whether we crawl on our bellies or whether a woman yields to the lust of man is symbolic of that same love of life which makes us stoop to anything. Therefore only he who loses his life shall save it : तेन त्यक्तेन भुंजीथा : Every reader should commit this matchless *shloka* to memory. But mere lip loyalty to it will be of no avail. It must penetrate deep down to the innermost recesses of his heart. To enjoy life one should give up the lure of life. That should be part of our nature.

So much for what a woman should do. But what about a man who is witness to such crimes ? The answer is implied in the foregoing. He must not be a passive onlooker. He must protect the woman. He must not run for police help ; he must not rest satisfied by pulling the alarm chain in the train. If he is able to practise non-violence, he will die in doing so and thus

save the woman in jeopardy. If he does not believe in non-violence or cannot practise it, he must try to save her by using all the force he may have. In either way there must be readiness on his part to lay down his life.

If old, decrepit and toothless, as I am, I were to plead non-violence and be a helpless witness of assault on the honour of a sister, my so-called Mahatmaship would be ridiculed, dishonoured and lost. If I or those like me were to intervene and lay down our lives whether violently or non-violently, we would surely save the prey and at any rate we would not remain living witnesses to her dishonour.

So much about the witnesses. But if the courageous spirit pervades the entire atmosphere of our country and it is known that no Indian will stand women being assaulted, I venture to say that no soldier will dare to touch them. That such a spirit does not exist is a matter of shame for us. But it will be something, if persons ready to wipe out this blot are forthcoming.

Those who have influence with the Government will try to get the authorities to take the necessary action. But self-help is best help. In the present circumstances we may rely only on our own strength and God's help.

On the train to Wardha, 19-2-42
Harijan, 1-3-1942

"I am a pacifist still in one sense; that is to say, I realize that Christians should be able to meet material force with spiritual power. It is horrifying to reflect that after nineteen hundred years, we are still unable to do it except in individual cases and on a small scale. But to me it seems merely 'wishful thinking' to act as though we had a power which in fact we have not and for which we have neither trained nor disciplined ourselves in the past. Such power does not come to those who have not disciplined themselves, at the last moment, in the hour of need. It has not come to us. I would rather, therefore, do what I can in defence of principles which I believe to be both right in themselves and of enormous importance to the future of the human race, than stand aside and do nothing. It is *doing nothing* that is the worst expedient of all.

When, therefore, my pacifist friends ask me whether I can imagine Jesus Christ dropping a bomb or firing a gun I am entitled to reply: 'No, I cannot; but neither can I imagine him standing aside and doing nothing at all.'

I am compelled to echo the words of a very dear relative of mine who, loathing war as much as any pacifist that ever breathed, said to me at the beginning of the last war (in which he lost his life): 'If you can stop war with spiritual power, do it. If you can't, let me do what I can; and if you are right in thinking that war is so damnable that anyone who takes part in it is damned, then I would rather be damned than let these things go on without doing all I can to stop them, even at the cost of my own life.'

Is this not very close to the meaning of our Lord when he said: 'He that loseth his life shall save it'?"

The foregoing is the concluding portion of a touchingly sorrowful article contributed to *The Survey Graphic* of December 1941 by the celebrated Dr. Maude Royden of the Guildhouse, London. She is one of the foremost pacifists of the West. Like many she has felt compelled to revise her position and is now most reluctantly but fully ranged on the side of the defenders of the British Isles.

The article demands a considered reply. I have been in constant touch with the Western pacifists. In my opinion

Dr. Royden has surrendered her position in the portion I have quoted. If individuals have lived up to the Christian teaching (i.e. on non-violence) and that on a small scale, one would think practice should make such a life possible for many people and on a large scale. It is undoubtedly wrong and foolish "to act as though one had the power which in fact one has not." "But," says the worthy writer, "such power does not come to those who have not disciplined themselves, at the last moment, in the hour of need."

I suggest that with the knowledge of the defect no time should be lost in seeking to remove it. That by itself is doing not only something but the right thing. To deny one's faith by contrary practice is surely the worst thing one can do.

And I am not sure that "doing nothing is the worst expedient of all." In septic treatment, for instance, doing nothing is not only expedient, it is obligatory.

There is no cause whatsoever for despondency, much less for denial of one's faith at the crucial moment. Why should not British pacifists stand aside and remodel their life in its entirety? They might be unable to bring about peace outright, but they would lay a solid foundation for it and give the surest test of their faith. When, in the face of an upheaval such as we are witnessing, there are only a few individuals of immovable faith, they have to live up to their faith even though they may produce no visible effect on the course of events. They should believe that their action will produce tangible results in due course. Their staunchness is bound to attract sceptics. I would also suggest that individuals like Dr. Maude Royden are not mere camp followers. They are leaders. Therefore, they have to live their lives in strict accord with the Sermon on the Mount, and they will find immediately that there is much to give up and much to remodel. The greatest thing that they have to deny themselves is the fruit of imperialism. The present complicated life of the Londoner and his high living is possible only because of the hoards brought from Asia, Africa and other parts of the world. In spite of the fierce criticism which has been levelled against my letter 'To Every Briton', I adhere to every word of it, and I am convinced that posterity will adopt the remedy suggested therein against violence however organized and fierce. And now that the enemy is at the gates of India I am advising

my countrymen the same course of action I advised the British people. My advice may or may not be accepted by my countrymen. I would remain unmoved. Their non-acceptance will be no test of failure of non-violence. I would subscribe to the charge of my imperfection. But a *satyagrahi* does not wait for perfection before he invites others to experiment with him, provided always that his faith is immovable like a mountain. The advice that Dr. Royden's relative gave her and which she quotes approvingly is altogether wrong. If the war is damnable, how can he stop the things that go on by taking part in it, even though it may be on the defensive side and at the cost of his own life? For the defence has to resort to all the damnable things that the enemy does, and that with greater vigour if it has to succeed. Such a giving of life is not only not saving it but a mere waste.

I have attended the Doctor's services in her Church where a living belief in the efficacy of prayer is much in vogue. When the impenetrable gloom surrounded her, why did she not find strength and consolation and real action in heart-prayer? It is never too late to mend. She and her fellow-pacifists, many of whom I have the privilege of knowing, should take heart and, like Peter, repent of the momentary loss of faith and return to the old faith in non-violence with renewed vigour. Their return will mean no material loss to the war effort but will mean a great deal to the anti-war effort which is bound to succeed sooner rather than later, if man is to live as man and not become a two-footed brute.

Sevagram, 8-3-42
Harijan, 15-3-1942

153

DESIRABILITY OF EXODUS

A correspondent asks for my detailed views on the exodus that I have advised from the cities of all who are not wanted there and all who are unfit or unwilling to stay there. No one is obliged to stay in against his will. In the event of bombardment, it is clear that non-combatants can only be a burden in every way. Successful defence against a powerful enemy requires exclusive concentration on holding the enemy at bay. The defendants' attention must not be divided. This is from the military point of view.

But we have war resisters too, either humanitarian or political. They may not stay unless their object is merely to cause embarrassment for the sake of it. I hope there are none such. They should, therefore, be out of the cities. Then there are those who do not know what to do in the event of bombardment. They should all evacuate. As the reader will see, my opinion has little to do with my war resistance. For in this case and up to a point military necessity and duty of war resisters demand the same action.

If I could convert any city or all cities wholly, including the combatants of yesterday, I should welcome the invading host and try to convert even them or challenge them to do their worst, without offering retaliation. But no such good luck awaits me. If the cities were converted, all India including the rulers would be converted and there would be peace in India and peace in the world. But that must remain a daydream yet awhile. Only I won't be moved from my position by being told that the Jap or the Nazi is not the same man as the Englishman. I draw no such fundamental distinction between man and man. But I must not detain the reader on the speculative side of the matter-of-fact question that faces us.

Assuming then that all who should or a part of them have evacuated the cities and have gone to the villages or are about to go, what should they do? They must go with the village mind to live the village life as much as possible. They may not re-

produce city conditions and build temporary palaces. They should go to the villages in a spirit of service, study their economic and other conditions, and ameliorate them not by giving alms but by giving the villagers work of a permanent nature. In other words, they should work the constructive programme among the villagers. Thus they will identify themselves with the villagers and become a kind of co-operative society with an ordered programme of economic, social, hygienic and political reconstruction.

The greatest problem the new-comers will have to tackle will be to deal with loot and dacoities. It will tax their resources to the utmost. The non-violent way is there. If that is not clear to them, with the co-operation of the villagers they should organize themselves for armed defence against robbers and dacoits. We have too long looked to the Government to do this elementary work for us, not excluding even the reclamation of castes called criminal tribes. The Government cannot do much, if anything at all, at this critical time. The work has perforce to be done by the evacuees violently, non-violently, or both ways.

Sevagram, 10-3-42
Harijan, 15-3-1942

154

EVACUATION

Q. You have advised evacuation from the cities of those who are not wanted for service or other reasons. But what are those poor people to do who have no homes to go to and who would be unwelcome wherever they go ?

A. This is a real difficulty. They must be provided for by the people of the provinces to which they belong. If we are one nation, we should have no difficulty in providing for every contingency that may arise. If we are to establish a new order of society, we can act from now. I can only speak from the non-violent angle and no other. If the national mind is working in that direction, consciously or unconsciously individuals and institutions will, without fuss, be absorbing all such persons as you mention. I know that the process is going on, but not on a scale large enough to be impressive. No able-bodied person should be put on charity ; he should be given work enough to feed him properly. This shifting of the population, if it is wisely done, must result in a silent reorganization of villages.

Sevagram, 26-4-42
Harijan, 3-5-1942

Q. You advise evacuation of cities likely to be bombed and migration into the villages. Do you imagine the villages to be safe ? As a matter of fact the villagers are more panic-stricken than the city-dwellers. There is inadequate police protection, and villagers live in hourly terror of dacoits and robbers. Is it not a matter of jumping from the frying pan into the fire ?

A. I have not suggested migration to the villages for the soft life they will provide. Fright was no ingredient of my plan. It was and still is good even from a military point of view as has now been made abundantly clear. All the danger you present is undoubtedly bound up with the migration to the villages. But that to my mind is an additional reason for it. Who will put heart into the villagers and dispel panic, if it is not the right type of experienced city people ? They will cover not only the

aged and the infirm who may migrate to the villages, but they will also help and serve the villagers in the many ways I have pointed out in these columns. Courage is indispensable in these times for every true act.

Sevagram, 4-5-42
Harijan, 10-5-1942

155

VILLAGE SWARAJ

Q. In view of the situation that may arise at any moment in India, would you give an outline or skeleton of a Village Swaraj Committee, which could function in all village matters in the absence of, and without relying upon an over-head Government or other organization? In particular, how would you ensure that the Committee should be fully representative and that it would act impartially, efficiently and without favour or fear? What should be the scope of authority and the machinery to enforce its commands? And what should be the manner in which a committee or an individual member of it could be removed for corruption, inefficiency or other unfitness?

A. My idea of village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow *useful* money crops, thus excluding *ganja*, tobacco, opium and the like. The village will maintain a village theatre, school and public hall. It will have its own waterworks ensuring clean water supply. This can be done through controlled wells or tanks. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course. As far as possible every activity will be conducted on the co-operative basis. There will be no caste such as we have today with their graded untouchability. Non-violence with its technique of *satyagraha* and non-co-operation will be the sanction

of the village community. There will be a compulsory service of village guards who will be selected by rotation from the register maintained by the village. The Government of the village will be conducted by the Panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishments in the accepted sense, this Panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Any village can become such a republic today without much interference, even from the present Government whose sole effective connection with the villages is the exaction of the village revenue. I have not examined here the question of relations with the neighbouring villages and the centre if any. My purpose is to present an outline of village government. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of the world. For the law governing every villager is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his village's honour.

The reader may well ask me, as I am asking myself while penning these lines, as to why I have not been able to model Sevagram after the picture here drawn. My answer is, I am making the attempt. I can see dim traces of success though I can show nothing visible. But there is nothing inherently impossible in the picture drawn here. To model such a village may be the work of a life time. Any lover of true democracy and village life can take up a village, treat it as his world and sole work, and he will find good results. He begins by being the village scavenger, spinner, watchman, medicine man and schoolmaster all at once. If nobody comes near him, he will be satisfied with scavenging and spinning.

Sevagram, 18-7-42
Harijan, 26-7-1942

156

'SCORCHED EARTH'

The Russian technique of scorched earth has staggered humanity, but humanity has been powerless to do anything except applaud the amazing sacrifice and bravery that counted no cost too great to circumvent the enemy. I have shared the amazement with the admirers but not their admiration.

We like to imitate what we admire. Now that the prospect faces us, are we able to contemplate with equanimity, or feel the glow of bravery and sacrifice at, the prospect of India's earth being scorched and everything destroyed in order that the enemy's march may be hampered ?

As a war resister my answer can only be one. I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence or defence. I would far rather leave, if I must, my crops and homestead for the enemy to use than destroy them for the sake of preventing their use by him. There is reason, sacrifice and even bravery in so leaving my homestead and crops, if I do so not out of fear but because I refuse to regard anyone as my enemy — that is, out of a humanitarian motive.

But in India's case there is, too, a practical consideration. Unlike Russia's, India's masses have no national instinct developed in the sense that Russia's have. India is not fighting. Her conquerors are. Supposing that the conquerors are worsted and the Japanese come, the inarticulate masses will not even notice the change for the time being or for a long time. The intelligentsia are divided on the issue of the war. The motive here is irrelevant. India's soldiers are in no sense a national army. They are soldiers because it is their profession. They will as soon fight under the Japanese or any other provided they are paid for fighting. In these circumstances the policy of scorched earth would be a wholly indefensible act.

It is therefore a matter for satisfaction that Indian opinion is being expressed against the policy of scorching. I know nothing of the requirements of the military, but they can never be allowed to supersede national or humanitarian considerations

which the nation may have accepted. The military must thus be an arm of the dominant civil power, not its substitute. The Government of India will considerably ease the situation and allay anxiety by declaring in unequivocal terms that they will not apply, if the occasion ever arise, the scorched earth policy to India, especial regard being had to her peculiar position.

Sevagram, 16-3-42
Harijan, 22-3-1942

157

SCORCHED EARTH

Thus writes a correspondent on my article 'Scorched Earth' in *Harijan* :

"In your article headed 'Scorched Earth' appearing in *Harijan* of the 22nd March you say as follows :

'As a war resister my answer can only be one. I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence or defence. I would far rather leave, if I must, my crops and homestead for the enemy to use than destroy them for the sake of preventing their use by him. There is reason, sacrifice and even bravery in so leaving my homestead and crops, if I do so not out of fear but because I refuse to regard anyone as my enemy — that is, out of a humanitarian motive.'

Firstly, although I do not approve of the violence which characterized Russia's resistance, I am of the view that there is great bravery and sacrifice in the scorched earth policy which they are adopting to resist the invader. I cannot, therefore, understand your saying that there is neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying property for defence. Secondly, although you ask people to resist the invader, you would prefer them to leave their crops and homestead for the invader to use, not out of fear but out of a humanitarian motive. I cannot understand how this can be reconciled with your teaching of resistance to evil. I think that non-violent resistance to the invader demands it of me that I should prevent anything which will be of use to him, such as crops or homestead etc., from falling into his hands even if this means sacrificing my life. May I request you to clarify this subject because it is of vital

importance that people should know how they should offer non-violent resistance to the invader ?"

Surely the meaning is plain. There is no bravery in my poisoning my well or filling it in so that my brother who is at war with me may not use the water. Let us assume that I am fighting him in the orthodox manner. Nor is there sacrifice in it, for it does not purify me, and sacrifice, as its root meaning implies, presupposes purity. Such destruction may be likened to cutting one's nose to spite one's face. Warriors of old had wholesome laws of war. Among the excluded things were poisoning wells and destroying food crops. But I do claim that there are bravery and sacrifice in my leaving my wells, crops and homestead intact, bravery in that I deliberately run the risk of the enemy feeding himself at my expense and pursuing me, and sacrifice in that the sentiment of leaving something for the enemy purifies and ennobles me.

My questioner has missed the conditional expression "if I must". I have imagined a state of things in which I am not prepared just now to die and therefore I want to retreat in an orderly manner in the hope of resisting under other and better auspices. The thing to consider here is not resistance but non-destruction of food crops and the like. Resistance, violent or non-violent, has to be well thought out. Thoughtless resistance will be regarded as bravado in military parlance, and violence or folly in the language of non-violence. Retreat itself is often a plan of resistance and may be a precursor of great bravery and sacrifice. Every retreat is not cowardice which implies fear to die. Of course a brave man would more often die in violently or non-violently resisting the aggressor in the latter's attempt to oust him from his property, but he will be no less brave if wisdom dictates present retreat.

Sevagram, 7-4-42
Harijan, 12-4-1942

158

INHUMAN IF TRUE

The Honorary Secretary of the Social Service Department of the Marwari Relief Society writes:

"I have to place before you a very brief review of the activities of the Marwari Relief Society, Calcutta, in connection with rendering relief to evacuees from Burma and Malaya, absolutely irrespective of caste, creed and colour, and also to humbly seek your invaluable advice on a very grave matter. The Society has undertaken to provide food, medical aid, and facilities for repatriation to thousands of helpless refugees who are arriving in Calcutta daily by rail, road and sea. Several emergent cases of delivery have also been attended to. The Society is also trying to secure suitable jobs for unemployed evacuees with the kind co-operation of respectable local firms.

In this connection I beg to report a certain very regrettable incident to you, and shall be grateful if you kindly advise me as to my duties in the matter.

On the night of the 14th March, shortly after the arrival of the Chittagong Mail, as I, in company with a number of volunteers, was attending to the wants of the evacuees, a British tommy got hold of a small child belonging to one of the poor evacuees and threw it under the train. Although I am a humble follower of your noble creed of non-violence, it was with the greatest difficulty that I restrained myself and my volunteers from punishing the soldier bodily for his brutal act. I reported the matter to the station military authorities, but their attitude was anything but sympathetic. I later approached Mr. K. C. Sen, I.C.S. over the matter, and though he promised to duly enquire into the matter, nothing has been done as yet to rectify it. There are still large numbers of soldiers loitering about the platforms every night, and a violent clash between these soldiers and relief volunteers and the public is a possibility which has to be tackled in no time. I have already placed the matter before the Bengal Congress Civil Protection Committee.

I should be thankful, if you kindly advise me on the following points:

1. Should I start an agitation in the press over the matter?

2. Supposing a soldier behaves indecently towards a helpless female evacuee, are we to put up with it silently, or should the soldier be forcibly dealt with?

> It would help us very greatly, if you kindly issued a statement in *Harijan* in this connection. I am prepared to accept all responsibility regarding the truthfulness of the above incident."

I have suppressed many letters giving me authentic details about the misbehaviour of soldiers. I have published them when it would have been wrong, if not cowardly, to suppress them. The letter in question demands, in my opinion, the widest publicity, not merely for the safety of the public but also for the sake of the soldiers and the Government. The Marwari Relief Society is a big philanthropic institution of twentyfive years' standing having an all-India reputation. It has funds and seasoned workers. Its prestige should have been enough security for the good behaviour of the soldiers in the presence of its workers. The soldier must have run amuck or been under the influence of drink to have behaved as he is reported to have done. I trust that the Marwari Relief Society will not leave the matter till it is thoroughly thrashed out ; and I trust too that the authorities will not wish to hush up the matter but will make ample amends, if the case is proved as reported by my correspondent.

So much for the case itself. The correspondent desires my guidance about similar cases in future. The action of *himsa* or *ahimsa* would have been identical. The volunteers should have, if they could, bodily prevented the soldier from touching the child or snatched the child from him, even if the soldier had been hurt in the act of preventing or snatching. The proceedings after the delivery of the child or the failure of the attempt would vary according as the deliverers were actuated violently or non-violently. Non-violent behaviour would dictate generous and gentle behaviour towards the culprit. But generosity and gentleness would have to be thoughtful and reasoned. It is difficult to lay down in advance the rule of conduct applicable in all cases. I can say this much that a truly generous act demands sincere recognition on the part of the culprit. I have known instances of Africans in South Africa insulted at railway stations saying to the rude White men, "My brother, God will forgive you for your rudeness," and the White men giggling, if not adding injury to insult. In similar circumstances I have myself remained silent and suffered the insult. I am quite clear that the Africans' so-called generosity was a mere mechanical act justly evoking

derision. Mine was timidity. I did not wish to evoke further insult. I certainly did not want to take legal proceedings. I was trying then to shape my non-violent conduct. If I had had the real courage, I would have expostulated with the insulters and risked the worst.

I have interpolated an examination of so-called non-violent conduct in cases of personal insult or injury. What about the child injured or the injury imagined by my correspondent? I think non-violent conduct would not, should not, be different. The distinction that is often drawn between personal injury and injury done to wards is unjustified, if not wrong. A man is not expected to do more for his wards than he would for himself. He would no doubt sacrifice himself for his ward's honour, but he would be expected to do likewise for his own. If he did otherwise, he would be voted a coward and is not likely to protect his ward's honour, if he is not able to protect his own. But I own that correct non-violent conduct does not come through mere reasoning. Reason is a necessary preliminary. But correctness of conduct will come only through repeated practice, maybe even repeated failures.

What violent conduct should be surely needs no examination.

Sevagram, 23-3-42
Harijan, 29-3-1942

159

QUESTION BOX

Weakening Non-violence ?

Q. In the instructions issued by the Working Committee of the Congress in the matter of organizing Congress volunteers it has been clearly stated that the organization should be based on "strictly non-violent basis". In the pledge forms prepared in this behalf by some Congress committees, however, it is stated that volunteers when on duty only should observe non-violence. The Karnatak P. C. C. has prepared volunteers' pledge in this form. The Chief Organizer of volunteers in the Province appointed by the K. P. C. C. declared in a public meeting held for the purpose of enrolling volunteers that a Congress volunteer even on duty might exercise the right of private defence by resorting to violence in an emergency, and further that such an action on his part did not contravene the instructions of the Working Committee. All this is creating confusion. If the instructions of the Working Committee are not to be strictly carried out, it would be better that the condition of non-violence were dropped altogether rather than were allowed to be diluted to suit individual ideas. What is your opinion in the matter ?

A. My answers must not be taken as authentic in questions the answers to which require the *imprimatur* of the Congress as this one does. My personal opinion is decisive. Violence in self-defence has no place in any corps organized by or in the name of the Congress. There can be no laxity in the enforcement of this rule without risking a break-down of the whole non-violent structure in the Congress. Use of violence in private self-defence is said to be permitted by the Congress because the Congress does not and cannot regulate the personal and private life of individual Congressmen. The individual in his private life is unfettered by the rules of the Congress. He is dominated by his own ethical code, if any.

Full Faith in Non-violence

Q. There are some Congressmen, though their number is very small, who have full faith in non-violence and who desire

to organize on that basis. Should not Congress committees organize such men? Or should not Congress committees allow such men to form their corps under the auspices of the Congress?

A. Congress committees cannot organize sections. The Congress can have only one policy. Today it is pure non-violence so far as internal affairs are concerned. Therefore I see no reason for separate peace committees. Purists, if they are humble and not self-opinionated, will act as a leaven in bodies which may contain men and women even of doubtful faith, as there must be in democratic organizations.

Bewildering Conflict

Q. There is a bewildering conflict of opinion among Congress leaders. Sardar speaks with one voice, Rajaji with another, Maulana with a third, and Jawaharlalji with a fourth — not to speak of the lesser lights. Whom is one to follow, who is to be regarded as the sole authority to interpret the Congress policy and resolutions?

A. Legally and constitutionally the President is the sole authority. If there is a conflict of opinion between the majority of the Working Committee and the President, as was once the case in the early stages, the majority view would supersede the President's. But on critical occasions legal opinion is not of much value. People have their favourite heroes, and they will follow the heroes even blindly. My advice, therefore, is that in the ticklish question of *ahimsa* each one should be his own authority not on the law but on interpretation. If all the four distinguished leaders whom you have mentioned were to sit together, they could probably give the same interpretation, but in the course of their speeches each would put his special emphasis on one aspect or another of the same matter.

On the way to Delhi, 26-3-42
Harijan, 5-4-1942

Expedience

Q. Several years ago I once had the temerity to ask whether the fact that you had allowed non-violence to come into the Congress as an expedient rather than as a creed would not be conducive to its breakdown at the critical time. You said you did not think so. But do you still feel the same? Would

you not today have had an organized band of believers in non-violence whom you could have sent in groups all over the country? It almost seems as if we had lost time and are found unprepared, as it were, to shoulder responsibility.

A. Yes, I adhere to my opinion that I did well to present to the Congress non-violence as an expedient. I could not have done otherwise, if I was to introduce it into politics. In South Africa too I introduced it as an expedient. It was successful there because resisters were a small number in a compact area and therefore easily controlled. Here we had numberless persons scattered over a huge country. The result was that they could not be easily controlled or trained. And yet it is a marvel the way they have responded. They might have responded much better and shown far better results. But I have no sense of disappointment in me over the results obtained. If I had started with men who accepted non-violence as a creed, I might have ended with myself. Imperfect as I am, I started with imperfect men and women and sailed on an uncharted ocean. Thank God that, though the boat has not reached its haven, it has proved fairly stormproof.

Sevagram, 7-4-42
Harijan, 12-4-1942

160

NON-VIOLENT RESISTANCE

Japan is knocking at our gates. What are we to do in a non-violent way? If we were a free country, things could be done non-violently to prevent the Japanese from entering the country. As it is, non-violent resistance could commence the moment they effected a landing. Thus non-violent resisters would refuse them any help, even water. For it is no part of their duty to help anyone to steal their country. But if a Japanese had missed his way and was dying of thirst and sought help as a human being, a non-violent resister, who may not regard anyone as his enemy, would give water to the thirsty one. Suppose the Japanese compel resisters to give them water, the resisters must die in the act of resistance. It is conceivable that they will exterminate all resisters. The underlying belief in such non-violent resistance is that the aggressor will, in time, be mentally and even physically tired of killing non-violent resisters. He will begin to search what this new (for him) force is which refuses co-operation without seeking to hurt, and will probably desist from further slaughter. But the resisters may find that the Japanese are utterly heartless and that they do not care how many they kill. The non-violent resisters will have won the day inasmuch as they will have preferred extermination to submission.

But things will not happen quite so simply as I have put them. There are at least four parties in the country. First, the British and the army they have brought into being. The Japanese declare that they have no designs upon India. Their quarrel is only with the British. In this they are assisted by some Indians who are in Japan. It is difficult to guess how many, but there must be a fairly large number who believe in the declaration of the Japanese and think that they will deliver the country from the British yoke and retire. Even if the worst happens, their fatigue of the British yoke is so great that they would even welcome the Japanese yoke for a change. This is the second party. The third are the neutrals, who though not non-violent will help neither the British nor the Japanese.

The fourth and last are non-violent resisters. If they are only a few, their resistance will be ineffective except as an example for the future. Such resisters will calmly die wherever they are but will not bend the knee before the aggressor. They will not be deceived by promises. They do not seek deliverance from the British yoke through the help of a third party. They believe implicitly in their own way of fighting and no other. Their fight is on behalf of the dumb millions who do not perhaps know that there is such a thing as deliverance. They have neither hatred for the British nor love for the Japanese. They wish well to both as to all others. They would like both to do what is right. They believe that non-violence alone will lead men to do right under all circumstances. Therefore, if for want of enough companions non-violent resisters cannot reach the goal, they will not give up their way but pursue it to death.

The task before the votaries of non-violence is very difficult. But no difficulty can baffle men who have faith in their mission.

This is going to be a long drawn out agony. Let non-violent resisters not make impossible attempts. Their powers are limited. A resister in Kerala is not physically responsible for the defence of Assam which is just now in imminent danger. If Assam is non-violently inclined, it is well able to take care of itself. If it is not, no party of non-violent resisters from Kerala can help it or any other province. Kerala can help Assam etc. by demonstrating its non-violence in Kerala itself. The Japanese army, if it gets a foothold in India, will not stop at Assam. In order to defeat the British, it has to overrun the whole country. The British will fight every inch of the ground. Loss of India will probably be admission of complete defeat for them. But whether it is so or not, it is quite clear that Japan will not rest till India is wholly in her hands. Hence non-violent resisters must remain at their posts wherever they are.

One thing has to be made clear. Where the British army is actually engaging the 'enemy', it would be perhaps improper for direct resistance to function. It will not be non-violent resistance when it is mixed with, or allies itself to, violence.

Let me therefore reiterate what I have said so often. The best preparation for, and even the expression of, non-violence

lies in the determined pursuit of the constructive programme. Anyone who believes that without the backing of the constructive programme he will show non-violent strength when the testing time comes will fail miserably. It will be, like the attempt of a starving unarmed man to match his physical strength against a fully fed and panoplied soldier, foredoomed to failure. He who has no belief in the constructive programme has, in my opinion, no concrete feeling for the starved millions. He who is devoid of that feeling cannot fight non-violently. In actual practice the expansion of my non-violence has kept exact pace with that of my identification with starved humanity. I am still far from the non-violence of my conception, for am I not still far away from the identification of my conception with dumb humanity?

On the train to Wardha, 5-4-42
Harijan, 12-4-1942

161

TO EVERY BRITON

When I had just begun my public career in South Africa I wrote "An Open Letter to Every Briton in South Africa". It had its effect. I feel that I should repeat the example at this critical juncture in the history of the world. This time my appeal must be to every Briton in the world. He may be nobody in the counsels of his nation. But in the empire of non-violence every true thought counts, every true voice has its full value. *Vox populi vox dei* is not a copy-book maxim. It is an expression of the solid experience of mankind. But it has one qualification. Its truth is confined to the field of non-violence. Violence can for the moment completely frustrate a people's voice. But since I work on the field of non-violence only, every true thought expressed or unexpressed counts for me.

I ask every Briton to support me in my appeal to the British at this very hour to retire from every Asiatic and African possession and at least from India. That step is essential for the safety of the world and for the destruction of Nazism and Fascism. In this I include Japan's 'ism' also. It is a good copy of the two. Acceptance of my appeal will confound all the

military plans of all the Axis Powers and even of the military advisers of Great Britain.

If my appeal goes home, I am sure the cost of British interests in India and Africa would be nothing compared to the present ever-growing cost of the war to Britain. And when one puts morals in the scales, there is nothing but gain to Britain, India and the world.

Though I ask for their withdrawal from Asia and Africa, let me confine myself for the moment to India. British statesmen talk glibly of India's participation in the war. Now India was never even formally consulted on the declaration of war. Why should it be ? India does not belong to Indians. It belongs to the British. It has been even called a British possession. The British practically do with it as they like. They make me — an all-war resister — pay a war tax in a variety of ways. Thus I pay two pice as war tax on every letter I post, one pice on every postcard, and two annas on every wire I send. This is the lightest side of the dismal picture. But it shows British ingenuity. If I was a student of economics, I could produce startling figures as to what India has been made to pay towards the war apart from what are miscalled voluntary contributions. No contribution made to a conqueror can be truly described as voluntary. What a conqueror the Briton makes ! He is well saddled in his seat. I do not exaggerate when I say that a whisper of his wish is promptly answered in India. Britain may, therefore, be said to be at perpetual war with India which she holds by right of conquest and through an army of occupation. How does India profit by this enforced participation in Britain's war ? The bravery of Indian soldiers profits India nothing.

Before the Japanese menace overtakes India, India's homesteads are being occupied by British troops — Indian and non-Indian. The dwellers are summarily ejected and expected to shift for themselves. They are paid a paltry vacating expense which carries them nowhere. Their occupation is gone. They have to build their cottages and search for their livelihood. These people do not vacate out of a spirit of patriotism. When this incident was referred to me a few days ago, I wrote in these columns that the dispossessed people should be asked to bear their lot with resignation. But my co-workers protested

and invited me to go to the evacuees and console them myself or send someone to perform the impossible task. They were right. These poor people should never have been treated as they were. They should have been lodged suitably at the same time that they were asked to vacate.

People in East Bengal may almost be regarded as amphibious. They live partly on land and partly on the waters of the rivers. They have light canoes which enable them to go from place to place. For fear of the Japanese using the canoes the people have been called upon to surrender them. For a Bengali to part with his canoe, is almost like parting with his life. So those who take away his canoe he regards as his enemy.

Great Britain has to win the war. Need she do so at India's expense ? Should she do so ?

But I have something more to add to this sad chapter. The falsity that envelops Indian life is suffocating. Almost every Indian you meet is discontented. But he will not own it publicly. The Government employees high and low are no exception. I am not giving hearsay evidence. Many British officials know this. But they have evolved the art of taking work from such elements. This all-pervading distrust and falsity make life worthless unless one resists it with one's whole soul.

You may refuse to believe all I say. Of course I shall be contradicted. I shall survive the contradictions.

I have stated what I believe to be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

My people may or may not approve of this loud thinking. I have consulted nobody. This appeal is being written during my silence day. I am just now concerned with Britain's action. When slavery was abolished in America many slaves protested, some even wept. But protests and tears notwithstanding, slavery was abolished in law. But the abolition was the result of a bloody war between the South and the North ; and so though the Negro's lot is considerably better than before, he still remains the outcast of high society. I am asking for something much higher. I ask for a bloodless end of an unnatural domination and for a new era, even though there may be protests and wailing from some of us.

Bombay, 11-5-42
Harijan, 17-5-1942

162

TWO ACTIONS

My proposal for the withdrawal of the British power involves two actions. One is to deal with the present emergency, and the other to secure freedom from British supremacy. The second admits of delay. There is a lot of confusion about its implications. I am trying to the best of my ability to deal with the questions as they arise from time to time.

The first admits of no delay and demands specific action irrespective of the proposal for British withdrawal. This is in connection with (1) the behaviour of troops, (2) the impending salt famine, (3) control of food grains, (4) evacuation for the sake of the military, (5) discrimination between Europeans and Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmans on the one hand and Indians on the other.

On the first item the people have the law and public opinion wholly on their side. The Government machinery is always slow to move, more so now, when it is all premortgaged for military preparations. People must everywhere learn to defend themselves against misbehaving individuals, no matter who they are. The question of non-violence and violence does not arise. No doubt the non-violent way is always the best, but where that does not come naturally the violent way is both necessary and honourable. Inaction here is rank cowardice and unmanly. It must be shunned at all cost. Pandit Nehru told me that at the stations in the north, platform hawkers have banded themselves for self-defence, so the troops are careful at those stations.

As to salt famine, the law is not quite on the people's side, but right is wholly on their side. I am hoping that the Government will put the widest construction on the clause referring to salt in Gandhi-Irwin Pact and allow people to manufacture salt wherever they can. And I would advise them to manufacture salt even at the risk of prosecution. Necessity knows no law. A starving man will help himself to food wherever he finds it. Rishi Vishwamitra did so.

Number three is difficult to deal with. But the same rule applies as to the second. Food cannot be manufactured as easily as salt. It is up to the merchants to band themselves to do what they can and force the hands of the Government to do the right thing by suggesting wise rules for the supply of food to the poor people at fixed prices. If this is not done in time looting shops is sure to be a daily event.

As to four, I have no doubt that the authorities may not ask people to vacate except where they are ready to offer equivalent land and buildings and cart the people and their belongings to the places prepared for them and pay them a living wage till they find suitable occupation. The people, if they have nowhere to move to, should simply refuse to vacate and suffer the consequences.

As to the fifth, the people should refuse to submit to discrimination and it will break down. Most of these difficulties take place because we have cultivated the habit of submitting to them. In the words of the late Lord Willingdon, we must learn resolutely to say 'no', when that is the real answer possible, and take the consequence.

Sevagram, 22-6-42
Harijan, 28-6-1942

163

LETTER TO THE GENERALISSIMO

(The following letter had been addressed to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek by Gandhiji. —Ed.)

Sevagram,
June 14, 1942

Dear Generalissimo,

I can never forget the five hours' close contact I had with you and your noble wife in Calcutta. I had always felt drawn towards you in your fight for freedom, and that contact and our conversation brought China and her problem still nearer to me. Long ago, between 1905 and 1913, when I was in South Africa, I was in constant touch with the small Chinese colony in Johannesburg. I knew them first as clients and then as comrades in the Indian passive resistance struggle in South Africa. I came in touch with them in Mauritius also. I learnt then to admire their thrift, industry, resourcefulness and internal unity. Later in India I had a very fine Chinese friend living with me for a few years and we all learnt to like him.

I have thus felt greatly attracted towards your great country and, in common with my countrymen, our sympathy has gone out to you in your terrible struggle. Our mutual friend, Jawaharlal Nehru, whose love of China is only excelled, if at all by his love of his own country, has kept us in intimate touch with the developments of the Chinese struggle.

Because of this feeling I have towards China and my earnest desire that our two great countries should come closer to one another and co-operate to their mutual advantage, I am anxious to explain to you that my appeal to the British Power to withdraw from India is not meant in any shape or form to weaken India's defence against the Japanese or embarrass you in your struggle. India must not submit to any aggressor or invader and must resist him. I would not be guilty of purchasing the freedom of my country at the cost of your country's freedom. That problem does not arise before me as I am clear that India cannot gain her freedom in this way, and a Japanese

domination of either India or China would be equally injurious to the other country and to world peace. That domination must therefore be prevented and I should like India to play her natural and rightful part in this.

I feel India cannot do so while she is in bondage. India has been a helpless witness of the withdrawals from Malaya, Singapore and Burma. We must learn the lesson from these tragic events and prevent by all means at our disposal a repetition of what befell these unfortunate countries. But unless we are free we can do nothing to prevent it, and the same process might well occur again, crippling India and China disastrously. I do not want a repetition of this tragic tale of woe.

Our proffered help has repeatedly been rejected by the British Government and the recent failure of the Cripps mission has left a deep wound which is still running. Out of that anguish has come the cry for immediate withdrawal of British Power so that India can look after herself and help China to the best of her ability.

I have told you of my faith in non-violence and my belief in the effectiveness of this method if the whole nation could turn to it. That faith in it is as firm as ever. But I realize that India today as a whole has not that faith and belief, and the Government in free India would be formed from the various elements composing the nation.

Today the whole of India is impotent and feels frustrated. The Indian army consists largely of people who have joined up because of economic pressure. They have no feeling of a cause to fight for, and in no sense are they a national army. Those of us who would fight for a cause, for India and China, with armed forces or with non-violence, cannot, under the foreign heel, function as they want to. And yet our people know for certain that India free can play even a decisive part not only on her own behalf, but also on behalf of China and world peace. Many like me feel that it is not proper or manly to remain in this helpless state and allow events to overwhelm us when a way to effective action can be opened to us. They feel, therefore, that every possible effort should be made to ensure independence and that freedom of action which is so urgently needed. This is the origin of my appeal to the British Power to end

immediately the unnatural connection between Britain and India.

Unless we make the effort there is grave danger of public feeling in India going into wrong and harmful channels. There is every likelihood of subterranean sympathy for Japan growing simply in order to weaken and oust British authority in India. This feeling may take the place of robust confidence in our ability never to look to outsiders for help in winning our freedom. We have to learn self-reliance and develop the strength to work out our own salvation. This is only possible if we make a determined effort to free ourselves from bondage. That freedom has become a present necessity to enable us to take our due place among the free nations of the world.

To make it perfectly clear that we want to prevent in every way Japanese aggression, I would personally agree, that the Allied Powers might, under treaty with us, keep their armed forces in India and use the country as a base for operation against the threatened Japanese attack.

I need hardly give you my assurance that, as the author of the new move in India, I shall take no hasty action. And whatever action I may recommend will be governed by the consideration that it should not injure China, or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China. I am trying to enlist world opinion in favour of a proposition which to me appears self-proved and which must lead to the strengthening of India's and China's defence. I am also educating public opinion in India and conferring with my colleagues. Needless to say, any movement against the British Government with which I may be connected will be essentially non-violent. I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority. But if in the vindication of the freedom which has become an immediate desideratum, this becomes inevitable, I shall not hesitate to run any risk however great.

Very soon you will have completed five years of war against Japanese aggression and invasion and all the sorrow and misery that these have brought to China. My heart goes out to the people of China in deep sympathy and in admiration for their heroic struggle and endless sacrifices in the cause of their country's freedom and integrity against tremendous odds. I am convinced that this heroism and sacrifice cannot be in vain; they

must bear fruit. To you, to Madame Chiang and to the great people of China, I send my earnest and sincere wishes for your success. I look forward to the day when a free India and a free China will co-operate together in friendship and brotherhood for their own good and for the good of Asia and the world.

In anticipation of your permission, I am taking liberty of publishing this letter in *Harijan*.

Yours sincerely,
Sd. M. K. GANDHI

164

TO EVERY JAPANESE

I must confess at the outset that, though I have no ill-will against you, I intensely dislike your attack upon China. From your lofty height you have descended to imperial ambition. You will fail to realize that ambition and may become the authors of the dismemberment of Asia, thus unwittingly preventing world federation and brotherhood without which there can be no hope for humanity.

Ever since I was a lad of eighteen studying in London over fifty years ago, I learnt, through the writings of the late Sir Edwin Arnold, to prize the many excellent qualities of your nation. I was thrilled when in South Africa I learnt of your brilliant victory over Russian arms. After my return to India from South Africa in 1915, I came in close touch with Japanese monks who lived as members of our Ashram from time to time. One of them became a valuable member of the Ashram in Sevagram, and his application to duty, his dignified bearing, his unfailing devotion to daily worship, affability, unruffledness under varying circumstances, and his natural smile which was positive evidence of his inner peace had endeared him to all of us. And now that owing to your declaration of war against Great Britain he has been taken away from us, we miss him as a dear co-worker. He has left behind him as a memory his daily prayer and his little drum, to the accompaniment of which we open our morning and evening prayers.

In the background of these pleasant recollections I grieve deeply as I contemplate what appears to me to be your unprovoked attack against China and, if reports are to be believed, your merciless devastation of that great and ancient land.

It was a worthy ambition of yours to take equal rank with the Great Powers of the world. Your aggression against China and your alliance with the Axis Powers was surely an unwarranted excess of that ambition.

I should have thought that you would be proud of the fact that that great and ancient people, whose old classical literature you have adopted as your own, are your neighbours. Your understanding of one another's history, tradition, literature should bind you as friends rather than make you the enemies you are today.

If I was a free man, and if you allowed me to come to your country, frail though I am, I would not mind risking my health, maybe my life, to come to your country to plead with you to desist from the wrong you are doing to China and the world and therefore to yourself.

But I enjoy no such freedom. And we are in the unique position of having to resist an imperialism that we detest no less than yours and Nazism. Our resistance to it does not mean harm to the British people. We seek to convert them. Ours is an unarmed revolt against British rule. An important party in the country is engaged in a deadly but friendly quarrel with the foreign rulers.

But in this they need no aid from foreign Powers. You have been gravely misinformed, as I know you are, that we have chosen this particular moment to embarrass the Allies when your attack against India is imminent. If we wanted to turn Britain's difficulty into our opportunity we should have done it as soon as the war broke out nearly three years ago.

Our movement demanding the withdrawal of the British Power from India should in no way be misunderstood. In fact, if we are to believe your reported anxiety for the independence of India, a recognition of that independence by Britain should leave you no excuse for any attack on India. Moreover the reported profession sorts ill with your ruthless aggression against China.

I would ask you to make no mistake about the fact that you will be sadly disillusioned if you believe that you will receive a willing welcome from India. The end and aim of the movement for British withdrawal is to prepare India, by making her free for resisting all militarist and imperialist ambition, whether it is called British Imperialism, German Nazism, or your pattern. If we do not, we shall have been ignoble spectators of the militarization of the world in spite of our belief that in non-violence we have the only solvent of the militarist spirit and ambition. Personally I fear that without declaring the independence of India the Allied Powers will not be able to beat the Axis combination which has raised violence to the dignity of a religion. The Allies cannot beat you and your partners unless they beat you in your ruthless and skilled warfare. If they copy it their declaration that they will save the world for democracy and individual freedom must come to naught. I feel that they can only gain strength to avoid copying your ruthlessness by declaring and recognizing *now* the freedom of India, and turning sullen India's forced co-operation into freed India's voluntary co-operation.

To Britain and the Allies we have appealed in the name of justice, in proof of their professions, and in their own self-interest. To you I appeal in the name of humanity. It is a marvel to me that you do not see that ruthless warfare is nobody's monopoly. If not the Allies some other Power will certainly improve upon your method and beat you with your own weapon. Even if you win you will leave no legacy to your people of which they would feel proud. They cannot take pride in a recital of cruel deeds however skilfully achieved.

Even if you win it will not prove that you were in the right, it will only prove that your power of destruction was greater. This applies obviously to the Allies too, unless they perform *now* the just and righteous act of freeing India as an earnest and promise of similarly freeing all other subject peoples in Asia and Africa.

Our appeal to Britain is coupled with the offer of Free India's willingness to let the Allies retain their troops in India. The offer is made in order to prove that we do not in any way mean to harm the Allied cause, and in order to prevent you from being misled into feeling that you have but to step into

the country that Britain has vacated. Needless to repeat that if you cherish any such idea and will carry it out, we will not fail in resisting you with all the might that our country can muster. I address this appeal to you in the hope that our movement may even influence you and your partners in the right direction and deflect you and them from the course which is bound to end in your moral ruin and the reduction of human beings to robots.

The hope of your response to my appeal is much fainter than that of response from Britain. I know that the British are not devoid of a sense of justice and they know me. I do not know you enough to be able to judge. All I have read tells me that you listen to no appeal but to the sword. How I wish that you are cruelly misrepresented and that I shall touch the right chord in your heart! Any way I have an undying faith in the responsiveness of human nature. On the strength of that faith I have conceived the impending movement in India, and it is that faith which has prompted this appeal to you.

I am

Your friend and well-wisher,

M. K. GANDHI

Sevagram, 18-7-42

Harijan, 26-7-1942

165

FASTING IN NON-VIOLENT ACTION

If the struggle which we are seeking to avoid with all our might has to come, and if it is to remain non-violent as it must in order to succeed, fasting is likely to play an important part in it. It has its place in the tussle with authority and with our own people in the event of wanton acts of violence and obstinate riots for instance.

There is a natural prejudice against it as part of a political struggle. It has a recognized place in religious practice. But it is considered a vulgar interpolation in politics by the ordinary politician though it has always been resorted to by prisoners in a haphazard way with more or less success. By fasting, however, they have always succeeded in drawing public attention and disturbing the peace of jail authorities.

My own fasts have always, as I hold, been strictly according to the law of *satyagraha*. Fellow *satyagrahis* too in South Africa fasted partially or wholly. My fasts have been varied. There was the Hindu-Muslim unity fast of 21 days in 1924 started under the late Maulana Mahomed Ali's roof in Delhi. The indeterminate fast against the MacDonald Award was taken in the Yeravda Prison in 1932. The 21 days' purificatory fast was begun in the Yeravda Prison and was finished at Lady Thakersey's, as the Government would not take the burden of my being in the prison in that condition. Then followed another fast in the Yeravda Prison in 1933 against the Government refusal to let me carry on anti-untouchability work through *Harijan* (issued from prison) on the same basis as facilities had been allowed me four months before. They would not yield, but they discharged me when their medical advisers thought I could not live many days if the fast was not given up. Then followed the ill-fated Rajkot fast in 1939. A false step taken by me thoughtlessly during that fast thwarted the brilliant result that would otherwise certainly have been achieved. In spite of all these fasts, fasting has not been accepted as a recognized part of *satyagraha*. It has only been tolerated by

the politicians. I have however been driven to the conclusion that fasting unto death is an integral part of *satyagraha* programme, and it is the greatest and most effective weapon in its armoury under given circumstances. Not every one is qualified for undertaking it without a proper course of training.

I may not burden this note with an examination of the circumstances under which fasting may be resorted to and the training required for it. Non-violence in its positive aspect as benevolence (I do not use the word love as it has fallen into disrepute) is the greatest force because of the limitless scope it affords for self-suffering without causing or intending any physical or material injury to the wrong-doer. The object always is to evoke the best in him. Self-suffering is an appeal to his better nature, as retaliation is to his baser. Fasting under proper circumstances is such an appeal par excellence. If the politician does not perceive its propriety in political matters, it is because it is a novel use of this very fine weapon.

To practise non-violence in mundane matters is to know its true value. It is to bring heaven upon earth. There is no such thing as the other world. All worlds are one. There is no 'here' and no 'there'. As Jeans has demonstrated, the whole universe including the most distant stars, invisible even through the most powerful telescope in the world, is compressed in an atom. I hold it therefore to be wrong to limit the use of non-violence to cave dwellers and for acquiring merit for a favoured position in the other world. All virtue ceases to have use if it serves no purpose in every walk of life. I would therefore plead with the purely political-minded people to study non-violence and fasting as its extreme manifestation with sympathy and understanding.

Sevagram, 20-7-42
Harijan, 26-7-1942

166

TO AMERICAN FRIENDS

Dear Friends,

As I am supposed to be the spirit behind the much discussed and equally well abused resolution of the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress on Independence, it has become necessary for me to explain my position. For I am not unknown to you. I have in America perhaps the largest number of friends in the West — not even excepting Great Britain. British friends knowing me personally are more discerning than the American. In America I suffer from the well-known malady called hero-worship. Good Dr. Holmes, until recently of the Unity Church of New York, without knowing me personally became my advertising agent. Some of the nice things he said about me I never knew myself. So I receive often embarrassing letters from America expecting me to perform miracles. Dr. Holmes was followed much later by the late Bishop Fisher who knew me personally in India. He very nearly dragged me to America but fates had ordained otherwise and I could not visit your vast and great country with its wonderful people.

Moreover, you have given me a teacher in Thoreau, who furnished me through his essay on the 'Duty of Civil Disobedience' scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa. Great Britain gave me Ruskin, whose 'Unto This Last' transformed me overnight from a lawyer and city-dweller into a rustic living away from Durban on a farm, three miles from the nearest railway station; and Russia gave me in Tolstoy a teacher who furnished a reasoned basis for my non-violence. He blessed my movement in South Africa when it was still in its infancy and of whose wonderful possibilities I had yet to learn. It was he who had prophesied in his letter to me that I was leading a movement which was destined to bring a message of hope to the down-trodden people of the earth. So you will see that I have not approached the present task in any spirit of enmity to Great Britain and the West. After having imbibed and assimilated the message of 'Unto This Last', I

could not be guilty of approving of Fascism or Nazism, whose cult is suppression of the individual and his liberty.

I invite you to read my formula of withdrawal or as it has been popularly called 'Quit India' with this background. You may not read into it more than the context warrants.

I claim to be a votary of truth from my childhood. It was the most natural thing to me. My prayerful search gave me the revealing maxim 'Truth is God' instead of the usual one 'God is Truth'. That maxim enables me to see God face to face as it were. I feel Him pervade every fibre of my being. With this Truth as witness between you and me, I assert that I would not have asked my country to invite Great Britain to withdraw her rule over India, irrespective of any demand to the contrary, if I had not seen at once that, for the sake of Great Britain and the Allied cause, it was necessary for Britain boldly to perform the duty of freeing India from bondage. Without this essential act of tardy justice, Britain could not justify her position before the unmurmuring World Conscience, which is there nevertheless. Singapore, Malaya and Burma taught me that the disaster must not be repeated in India. I make bold to say that it cannot be averted unless Britain trusts the people of India to use their liberty in favour of the Allied cause. By that supreme act of justice Britain would have taken away all cause for the seething discontent of India. She will turn the growing ill-will into active goodwill. I submit that it is worth all the battleships and airships that your wonder-working engineers and financial resources can produce.

I know that interested propaganda has filled your ears and eyes with distorted versions of the Congress position. I have been painted as a hypocrite and enemy of Britain under disguise. My demonstrable spirit of accommodation has been described as my inconsistency, proving me to be an utterly unreliable man. I am not going to burden this letter with proof in support of my assertions. If the credit I have enjoyed in America will not stand me in good stead, nothing I may argue in self-defence will carry conviction against the formidable but false propaganda that has poisoned American ears.

You have made common cause with Great Britain. You cannot therefore disown responsibility for anything that her representatives do in India. You will do a grievous wrong to

the Allied cause, if you do not sift the truth from the chaff whilst there is yet time. Just think of it. Is there anything wrong in the Congress demanding unconditional recognition of India's independence? It is being said, 'But this is not the time.' We say, 'This is the psychological moment for that recognition. For then and then only can there be irresistible opposition to Japanese aggression. It is of immense value to the Allied cause if it is also of equal value to India. The Congress has anticipated and provided for every possible difficulty in the way of recognition. I want you to look upon the immediate recognition of India's independence as a war measure of first class magnitude.

I am,
Your Friend,
M. K. GANDHI

On the way to Bombay, 3-8-42
Harijan, 9-8-1942

Appendices

I

WAR AGAINST WAR

(By B. de Ligt)

[Rev. B. de Ligt of Oned, Geneva, it will be remembered, wrote an open letter to me last year on my attitude towards war especially in view of my participation in the Boer War, the Zulu Rebellion in Natal and the late War. The open letter was published in the European Press, and I satisfied myself with merely publishing my reply* in these pages without publishing the former. The reverend gentleman has now sent me a rejoinder which he calls second open letter, and would have me to publish his letter. Although it is too long for these pages I may not resist the writer's request. He has taken great pains over his composition, and I appreciate the interest peace lovers in the West are taking in my views and conduct. I am publishing the letter in two parts. And after the conclusion of the second part I hope to write out a brief reply. † M. K. G.]

I

It is in the name of all those who, throughout the world, are fighting against the terrible mania for violence which is ravaging the universe, that I thank you for having kindly replied, so frankly and precisely, to my open letter of May, 1928.

Your reply cuts both ways. It is reassuring on the one side, but disappointing on the other. From the point of view of immediate opposition to war, it is of great importance that you should have declared openly that you no longer wish to participate in any combat whatsoever on behalf of England. If the masses who are with you are ready to oppose, at critical moments, any war movement on the part of the Government in London, no longer desiring to give either their gold or their blood, they become a real factor for peace.

As I already wrote you, movements are being born today throughout the whole world, and spreading continuously, to

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* Chapter 30, p. 73, in this book.

† Chapter 36, p. 86, in this book.

oppose war. You may be sure that your courageous declaration is received in those quarters with joy.

Moreover, you have recognized without circumlocution that the work of the Red Cross forms part of the gigantic machinery of war. This declaration was confirmed by the impressive statement of the American nursing sister, who sent back to the French Government her Croix de Guerre because she had finally become convinced that all her so-called humanitarian work had been, on the whole, only a refined sort of war work. By a happy coincidence, this statement was published in the same number of *The World Tomorrow* (November 1928) as the report of our correspondence. This statement was further confirmed by the letter of Albert de Jong, Secretary of the International Anti-militarist Bureau, to the XIIIth Conference of the Red Cross at the Hague, showing how this institution, willynilly, is today forced even to collaborate in the perfecting of war gases. In the same manner, you also are helping us to tear the veil from the face of false charities, under cover of which the militarists of all countries are trying to arouse at least a little sympathy for 'national defence' in good-hearted men and women.

On the other hand, however, your reply has caused in Western countries profound disappointment. For, in the main, you have accepted rather than rejected war, if not on your own behalf, at least, in principle, for your people. At the present time you are, happily, against India's participation in any war whatsoever undertaken by the British Empire. But, until when ? If, for instance, in a short time, a Macdonald Government is formed in England and it should be tactician enough to make advances to you with regard to Home Rule and to give you, at least formally, the reward which you vainly hoped to obtain by participating in the war of 1914-1918, what would you do, if that friendly Government let itself be driven into a new war ? That is a burning question. Do not say that such a war is impossible. Everywhere one is preparing for it, even more than before 1914. Politicians are already speaking of an eventual war between the United States and England; strategists and technicians are studying it. And like any other socialist Government, an English socialist Government would continue the tradition of 'national defence'; it would in any case be

ready to go to war on behalf of the League of Nations, that trust of modern imperialism whose fatal character I have made manifest in my book *Contre la Guerre Nouvelle* which I have sent to you. Macdonald, who was formerly among the conscientious objectors, has just declared that as a practical man it is for him impossible to renounce the force of arms.

That is why your reply, however frank and courageous it may be, can reassure us, alas, but very relatively.

As I have already written you, I also do not hold to a dogmatic point of view of non-violence. I recognize impartially the right of any oppressed class or race to liberate itself by means of arms. I grant that from a moral point of view a people which defends itself militarily does better than if it did not defend itself at all because of cowardice or lack of character—although I can quite well imagine a people which, urged by worthy humanitarian sentiments, renounces war methods, even while still incapable of liberating itself by higher means. But today the international situation has changed so much that such an affirmation can only have quite an abstract sense. Modern warfare has become a technical-industrial system, so complicated and so refined that for many years to come coloured races will not be able to employ it against the hypercivilized barbarians who have been unconsciously preparing themselves for it for a few centuries past, and have been consciously adapting themselves to it for the last hundred years or so. The surest arm, especially for coloured races, is non-violent resistance. Their objective right of armed resistance is becoming, from the practical point of view, something more and more academic. By the force of things, oppressed races are even obliged to make, so to speak, a virtue of necessity. For that their minds are, fortunately, very favourably constituted, as was shown by your experiences in Africa and in India and by the success of the general strikes and the boycott in China.

All that, moreover, is taking place at a time when the Western nations are beginning to recognize that they must renounce war, the latter becoming more and more a fatal peril for victors as well as for vanquished. The man of the West risks becoming the victim of his destructive machines: he can no longer control them. "Our civilization," writes Hans Prager, in a little book about yourself, "hides behind a very virile mask

our moral weakness, our fear. We are no longer warriors, but mere servants of lifeless machines. Heroic war has turned away from Europe. Soon it will no longer be the men who will take up arms, but the machines which will take up men. That which makes the pride of man, his inventive genius, will become his shame for having created machinery which prevents his defending himself any more by his own strength." This double fact — that while the coloured races are not masters of the means of modern warfare, the modern nations are themselves mastered by these means — constitutes what seems to me the right starting point in order to try to win over all peoples of all races to a united and powerful direct action against war.

I am, therefore, not an absolutist, bestriding some obsolete hobby. Although detesting all vulgar opportunism, I understand perfectly your statement as to the necessity for compromise in order to be able to live and to act. I also feel for you profoundly in your moral difficulties concerning the need of defending your crops by force against the monkeys. As a vegetarian who has lived the greater part of his life in the country, I know by bitter experience that *ahimsa* can only be applied in quite a relative manner. The interesting publications on plants of your eminent compatriot, J. C. Bose, render this question still more complicated. In any case, as regards animals, you hope, with good reason, to reach one day a more satisfactory solution. You will understand, therefore, how I hope still more to reach, as regards men, a better solution than this false solution of international questions by means of war, especially the 'total war' of modern times. And I reckon upon attaining my object in this field more quickly than in others, because our political and social enemies are neither beasts nor plants, but living beings endowed with intelligence and human conscience. That, indeed, is the reason why your example concerning the monkeys has scarcely convinced me as an explanation of your conduct towards the Zulus, the Boers, and the Central Powers.

Just while preparing this letter I heard that your intimate friend, the Rev. C. F. Andrews, had arrived at Geneva. In the course of a conversation I had with him, you and your work, you may be sure, were the principle topic of discussion, the more so as he was engaged in the composition of a book on your conception of the world and your ideas concerning life and morality,

from the point of view of Swaraj. During those unforgettable hours, he described to me your life, spoke to me of your devotion to India, a work which seemed to be extending more and more until finally its influence should embrace the universe. You, who desired only to be a simple servant of India, have become, little by little, one of the moral leaders of the world.

You feel it yourself. Only a short time ago you sent to the White peoples, through an American press bureau, a statement, published even in the *Journal de Geneva*, saying that you reject official Christianity in the name of the message of Jesus as you understand it in his Sermon on the Mount. Since the memorable letter which Tolstoy sent to you in 1909, we Western peoples recognize more and more our need of you, of your traditions, of your nation. As I wrote you previously, we owe to you some experiences decisive for the world's future.

What more gladsome news than to learn from the mouth of your own friend that it is possible, not to say certain, that you may come to Europe soon? You will understand how much I am hoping to see you, in order that we may be able to discuss thoroughly our respective points of view. In the meantime, I shall continue to study your ideas as well as the important book of Mr. Andrews, who is trying, for the first time, to make Western nations understand how your religious point of view dominates your ideas and your acts.

Young India, 2-5-1929

II

WAR AGAINST WAR

(*By B. de Ligt*)

Let me venture, for the moment, to explain to you how the greater number of Western war-resisters conceive their attitude towards their Governments, what impression your reply has made, and how we fear, as its consequence, an eventual militarization of India.

In the first place we all know that modern governments are only functionaries of capitalism and imperialism. We likewise all — including libertarians and anarchists — recognize that the present governments from time to time, perhaps even as a rule, do good more or less. But that can never be for us a sufficient motive for collaborating unreservedly with them in all their enterprises. I am supposing, for instance, that some one — or some government — does me a great service. Am I then obliged, from the moral point of view, to come to his assistance even when he acts badly, offends and kills, and forms schemes which are in flagrant opposition to any religious or humanitarian conceptions ? No, quite the contrary. The more grateful I feel towards him, the less can I collaborate with him in evil work. Quite apart from my own conduct, is it not my duty to hold him back as far as possible from wrong-doing ? In the anti-militarist movement of the Netherlands, we have always said to ourselves : Our first duty is to prevent the Dutch Government — that Government which is, besides, rather our enemy than our friend — from committing the great crime of taking part in collective murder. Moreover, if we do not oppose military measures on the part of our Government, we ourselves shall be obliged to take part in acts unworthy of man, the Government compelling us even to attack and kill other men who are not our enemies, but comrades in misfortune on the other side of the frontier, ill-treated by their authorities who, like our own, are serving above all capitalist and imperialist interests whose defence by

violence is in conflict with the essential needs of all peoples. Even if we suppose for an instant that foreign armies should really be our enemies, well, also in this extreme case we would like to defend ourselves in a different manner, in a manner which would at any rate gain for us a moral victory. Doubtless this mode of action might fail from a practical point of view, but the other might fail also ; and the first alone assures the existence in the world of that which is truly humane. In short, we wish to strengthen in all countries the power of direct action against war, in such a way that no Government would have the courage to resort to war, that it would even be impossible for it to do so for lack of men, arms and munitions.

During the world war, the greater number of the radical conscientious objectors, English, American, Australian, Canadian, German, Austrian, etc. were convinced that it was their duty, as good citizens, not to participate in the great crime. Indeed, what better could they do from their point of view, than remain during that senseless time beings truly conscious of their humane ideal, representing the conscience of their nations waging war without scruple ? What better could they do than put humanity before their inhuman fatherland, so as to gain over to this cause not only their compatriots but, in the long run, their official enemies also ? Romain Rolland has expressed this point of view when he says that no one has the right to betray his conscience for love of his country, his race or his nation. In doing so, does one not betray in oneself that which is best in one's nation, in one's race, in one's country ? We have always been told that if Christ had acted in this sense, he would have become the ally of Judas, he would not have been crucified and would have become the Messiah of those of his compatriots who did not wish to renounce national defence. Tolstoy has told us several times that one should have the courage to risk the sacrifice of one's country in favour of humanity and the universal conscience.

You will understand therefore why your participation in three wars of the British Empire against peoples, who were not even your enemies, is for us something very painful. For in doing that you forsook humanity in favour of merciless and unscrupulous imperialism. You accept, in principle, all the consequences of those enterprises of violence : the death of 26,370

women and children in the concentration camps in South Africa, the death and sufferings of hundreds of thousands of little children of the Central Powers by the monstrous blockade, the unemployment without end to which the British working classes are condemned, etc., etc., all the horror and shame, physical and moral, consequent upon the Great War. We are convinced that you did not foresee such an ocean of misery and decadence. We willingly believe you when you declare that you never wished to act otherwise than in the sense of *ahimsa*. But we ask you whether the world-war has not shown sufficiently that if one desires above all *ahimsa* for men, one must at once break with any system of national defence based on violence.

Do not imagine that we refuse to defend our rights and liberties. We wish, indeed, to defend them in the most sublime manner, by remaining faithful to the noblest traditions of secular Christianity and modern socialism. Even if we considered to be just the cause for which our nation would be fighting in a supposed war, we would only come to its aid in our own fashion, because over and above our country, as well as for the sake of that country, we would have to uphold universal humanity.

These arguments hold good still more today when, as everyone knows, the chief question is this: In what manner will humanity free itself as quickly as possible from that unworthy expedient, war, an expedient which is an unparalleled menace for all, vanquished and victors alike? We must inevitably raise international relations to a higher level, else humanity will be lacerated to such an extent, physically, morally and intellectually, that it will perhaps never recover.

Now, just when the courageous women of the American section of the International Women's League for Peace and Liberty are asserting with reason that all war is today civil war, because of the economic and intellectual interdependence of all nations, just when Western nations, after a frightful experience, are beginning to recognize the meaning of your mission and the practical character of the methods of passive resistance, the efficacy of which is proved by your Asiatic peoples, you write that it is possible that, once India is liberated, you might vote for the military training of the Indian people. This declaration coincides with the publication of the Nehru plan, according to

which India not only demands Home Rule, but also asks to be allowed to assure her own national defence. The articles published in *Foreign Affairs* of April 1928 by Sir Sivaswami Aiyar, conversations I have had with Swami Satya Deva, Dr. Datta, and other compatriots of yours, have led me to fear that India also may one day let herself be carried away by the fatal current of armaments. It is for that reason that a few months ago, at the International Conference against War, at Sonntagsberg, I warned those present of the possibility of a militarization of the Asiatic nations, favoured in a very imprudent manner by Moscow and the III International, accompanied by the menace of a similar militarization of Africa. Making almost desperate efforts to rid the world of the monstrosity of modern war, and just when our action is beginning to be taken seriously, we all at once perceive on the Eastern horizon a new military danger which serves as a pretext to our militarists to say: "But we must arm in order to be able to defend ourselves against the awakening East!" Thus, the vicious circle, on the point of being broken, seems to be closing mercilessly.

You know Afghanistan is becoming militarized. Chiang Kai-Shek has already declared that China will have, in about 15 years, a fleet of war and a powerful army. A Chinese friend, formerly an enemy of all war, whom I saw again in Europe a few months ago, assured me that not only is militarism in China —until now totally unknown—growing steadily, but that the world is threatened by something unheard of in history, a Chinese imperialism! He, who had formerly awakened in me a love for the great anti-war traditions of his country and a profound sympathy for the pacifism of its immortal sages, acknowledged that he too had broken with his anti-militarist past. He spoke almost like you, Gandhi, who now say essentially what has always been preached by the clergy of the West: "We are for love and against all violence, in which personally we shall never participate. But if it is necessary, we shall support military training and national defence, since nations ought to be able to defend their rights, to gain their liberty, to be themselves, whilst the masses have not the spiritual strength of a Jesus, a St. Paul or a Francois d'Assisi."

Perhaps in bygone days this conception had some meaning. But today? The Japanese professor, Inazo Nitobe who under-

stands and loves so intensely the heroic tradition of the *bushido* of his warlike country, writes in his book on the Soul of Japan, in which he recognizes in such an admirable manner the relative right of the fighting instinct which slumbers in each individual: "If one is to believe history, the State, built up on warlike virtues — whether it be a city like Sparta or an empire like Rome — will never be able to build upon earth 'a durable city' .... Life has widened out extraordinarily in the present era. Missions nobler and greater than that of armies are today soliciting our attention. Men have become more than subjects, being raised to the state of citizens; what am I saying? *They are more than citizens*, they are men...... The history of the world confirms the prophecy that the meek shall inherit the earth." And he seeks sublime forces for a nobler fight in the most profound traditions of Christianity, of Buddhism, of Chinese philosophy, and in the religious and moral traditions of his own country. Thus expresses himself a man, in no wise a revolutionary, who, in our opinion, has too much confidence in present-day political methods. But he is right in principle.

It is necessary, in fact, finally to break with this system of scientific ferocity which characterizes modern war, as much from the practical as from the moral point of view. We are, therefore, puzzled and uneasy on hearing you declare yourself ready eventually to vote for the military training of the Indians, you who seemed to us the appointed missionary to awaken such moral forces in your compatriots that they would have less and less need of means of defence as barbarous as hypercivilized.

We wonder whether you, Gandhi, always so distrustful with regard to the industrialism of the West, are not, in fact, now inclined to accept, along with a military training for your people, the most pernicious consequence of this industrialism, the new war. The Nehru Committee, has it not already proposed an army, a naval fleet and an air fleet for India? That is to say, by your last declaration you encourage the introduction into your country of industrialized war, of war industries, of chemical, electro-technical and even bacteriological war. Once launched upon this path, there is no stopping. It is a question of all or nothing.

Why not keep to the means the most efficacious for Orientals, that is passive resistance, boycott and general strikes?

Even if these means fail, their consequence will never be serious as those of modern war. For if a modern war were successful, it would smite fatally the masses of the people in the conquering States as in the conquered. The militarist system is no longer a means of defence worthy of confidence. But confidence in the deepest forces of man himself is an inexhaustible source of energy which is proving itself more and more efficacious in enabling one to stand one's ground, as a man, a nation or a race. And if this energy is not yet sufficiently developed, what better can one do than arouse and strengthen it everywhere ?

I am profoundly sorry to feel myself again obliged to write you a letter concerning the question of war. I understand how much your time and your energy are taken up with the work which you devote to the education of your people. But you have also become a world leader. The most bigoted nationalists, the Bolshevists, the Fascists even, are already using your reply to my letter against those in all countries who frankly object to the so-called national defence. You are at the same time sowing a pernicious hesitation in the hearts of thousands of men and women, at a moment when a single affirmative word on your part might perhaps have gained them over definitely to our cause.

It is of the greatest importance that, for the time being, we should be able to count upon you for our war against war. But that, however, is not enough. The day you would vote for the military training of your compatriots, you would be setting yourself against those Indians who are in agreement with us who, in the spirit of Garrison, of Ballou, of Keir Hardie and of Tolstoy, according to the ethics of true Christianity and the methods of truly modern socialism, disapprove of all national defence and condemn all military preparation, against those who are endeavouring to relieve humanity of a burden under which it is in danger of succumbing.

In *Die Emporung Asiens* Colin Rosz tells us how you fear, from the humanitarian point of view, the threatening militarization of China. I share your anxiety, as is shown by my statement on China in *Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit*, the German manual of the W. R. I. Can you not also share our anxiety regarding an eventual militarization of China and of India, of Asia and of Africa ? The consequences of such militarization

would be a world-madness of war, a universal return to barbarism. Help us to shatter the vicious circle that holds the world in thrall rather than fortify it to the detriment of your own people and all the other peoples of the globe.

It is particularly in the name of Tolstoy, the centenary of whose birth we have commemorated this year, that I appeal to you to meditate on this question, in the name of Tolstoy who wrote in 1906 to Kou Hou Ming:

"Whilst European nations have long ago chosen the deceptive path in which liberation from human violence is extraordinarily difficult, the Oriental nations have only arrived at the crossroads."

Your Asiatic nations can still choose the right road. Seeing the misery of the Western peoples, the Oriental peoples should, according to Tolstoy, renounce any attempt to free themselves by political means and endeavour to remain faithful to the only true law which renders impossible the submission of man to violence.

You have not published my former letter in *Young India*. I should be very grateful to you, if you would kindly publish this one, as I, on my side, publish what you write to me in the European and American press. For, in appealing to you, I appeal to those who are with you and who will be with us, I hope, in hatred of war and love of humanity.

I would like those who are interested in the question of the liberation of classes and races to realize that war, as a means of resistance, is morally wrong and practically harmful, and that our conscience and our reasoning condemn it as well as any form of preparation, including military training.

Always ready to collaborate with you against war and for the liberation of oppressed races and classes, and assuring you of my profound sympathy.

Young India, 9-5-1929

III

'CAT AND MOUSE'

Most Venerated Gandhi,

I agree entirely with you in recognizing that indeed the inhuman rivalry, which goes on throughout the whole earth to exploit all the so-called inferior races, is one of the principal causes of modern war. This rivalry was even one of the essential causes of the world war. Moreover, those other two wars also, on the occasion of which we exchanged views, presented an imperialist character. But alas! the explanation of your participation in those wars convinces me less and less.

In any case, the fact that you declare yourself unable "in any conceivable circumstance" to participate in British wars, is a real step forward. As I have already noted, you and the millions who are with you could become (unless some quite unforeseen circumstances should arise) a factor for world peace of the highest importance.

But on the other hand, your assertion, almost diplomatic, that you will never take part in no matter what "war of exploitation" entered upon by an India eventually free, does not seem to offer sufficient security for the future. This assertion, does it perhaps proceed from the fact that you were thinking of an India which, as a dominion, would be obliged in certain circumstances to take part in armed measures of the Empire and in eventual sanctions of the League of Nations?

I repeat, my objections do not concern your relative appreciation in regard to the violent struggle for freedom. But they are aimed solely at the fact that you, who personally uphold a more sublime form of struggle and who from several points of view have carried out this struggle within the frontiers of the British Empire, are at the same time morally encouraging the militarization of your own country rather than opposing it, and that at a time when any national armament begins to be a menace for the whole of humanity. My objections, likewise, are directed against your collaboration in the preparation of a national Indian State, organized on the same lines as the Western

States, in which, according to the supplementary report of the enlarged Nehru Committee, published in the Indian *Forward* of the 21st December 1928, there would function a Committee of Defence formed by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defence, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, the Commander of the Air Forces, the Commander of the Naval Forces and the Chief of the General Staff, whilst the Head of the Government, in the event of India being attacked, or if he should consider it as the victim of an aggression, will have the right to raise what money he will esteem necessary for the security of India or of any part of it.*

It seems to us, that in acting in quite a different manner from Tolstoy, you put too much confidence in measures of bourgeois policy, and that you participate in the organization of a form of government which not only will oppress the great masses of your people, but at the same time might become a danger for the evolution of world history. That status of dominion, to the realization of which you are today devoting all your strength, is a political institution which will inevitably be used against the great masses of the population of your own country by the dominant Indian classes, which will become more and more allied with the dominant foreign classes. And the military, aero-chemical and naval measures, for which your country is going also to decide, risk promoting still further the world competition in armaments.

The statements made in the Frankfort Conference on Modern War Methods and the Protection of Civil Populations have just been published. More clearly than ever they show that all technique and science are today being directed in the first place towards collective destruction and murder. This Conference has shown that war has become a method of struggle operating in such a fatal manner, from the moral as well as from the practical point of view, that it must be abolished, not only for national defence but also for the realization of the social revolution. Not to enlarge further on this point, I beg

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* Committee of *Defence*, Minister of *Defence*; then in paragraph 77 : in the event of foreign aggression on India *or upon his being satisfied that there is a reasonable apprehension of such aggression.* As one can see, all that is borrowed from Western States, where, in order to tranquillize public opinion, one is beginning today to speak of "Ministry of Defence", and where one declares the intention of only defending oneself against aggression or against that which is considered as aggression.

you to refer to the speech of Arthur Muller-Lehning and to my own, delivered at the World Congress against Imperialism in Frankfort. We have now reached a decisive moment in history when the question is to find in all continents powerful groups of men and women who can declare conscientiously: "As for us, we refuse, in all cases, to prepare or to employ any engines of war, and we seek to reduce more and more their preparation and their employment. Strictly speaking, we prefer even to lose our national independence—independence which, moreover, is today becoming more and more fictitious— rather than maintain it by such means."

Could national independence become a fiction? It might indeed, as we are traversing an epoch of growing international interdependence. As I have stated elsewhere, national units are no longer in a position to dispose of themselves in a really free fashion from the political and economic point of view, neither within the boundaries of Soviet Russia which contains so many different peoples, nor outside those boundaries. If your India attains the Dominion Status, it will be, from several points of view, allied to the British Empire. It will be subjected, as part of that Empire, and also as a member of the League of Nations, to all sorts of obligations which it will not be able to escape, however little they may interest India directly. As soon as your country begins to arm, it becomes immediately dependent upon international capital for munitions, and upon the great foreign banks; as soon as it begins to develop its industry, your ruling class immediately calls upon financial powers outside the country, which inevitably will place heavy chains about the neck of your own people. Modern capitalism, which today embraces almost the whole earth, is tending unremittingly towards a universal dictatorship. This can only be weakened and eventually crushed, if we create against it a united international front, formed of all races and all peoples, which would fight, not for out-of-date nationalist conceptions, but for the realization of a universal and supernational community. Today all nationalism, considered purely as such, is old-fashioned, not only from the historical but likewise from the moral point of view, although from the ideological point of view it still flourishes and works everywhere. In fact national war is becoming more and more transformed into a struggle of

classes and races, embracing the whole earth. It is for us now to fight in the most humane and the most universal manner for our own liberation and for that of all classes and of all oppressed races.

It seems, however, that you, venerated Gandhi, have first of all concentrated your attention in too one-sided a manner upon India instead of taking into consideration, in the first place, the whole of humanity of which, nevertheless, your people also form part, and that with an impatience only too comprehensible you sought, as principal object, to attain 'tangible results'. It is this attitude which risks limiting your horizon and causing your tactics to swerve from their universal tendency. Of course we sympathize with you in your impatience, from several points of view, because we ourselves are fighting against our own Governments for the liberation of the coloured races. Since even we of the Occident cannot bear the injustice endured by the coloured peoples, how much more must it be unbearable to you, son of an oppressed Oriental nation? But when your impatience, so noble in itself, leads you to make use of methods which have a most dangerous tendency, we must set ourselves against it. And when, moreover, you even try to make it believed that India has hitherto been "helplessly driven into Britain's wars of exploitation", in spite of herself, we can only reply: No. Things have not happened thus, for you yourself are one of those who have consciously induced India to participate in such wars, and because of that you also must bear the full responsibility for it.

On your side, you state that those who set themselves against Western wars pay, nevertheless, taxes which are used by the State for war and the oppression of the coloured peoples. That is quite true. In fact our anti-militarist struggle also is as yet only something very relative, and it must go on extending. But in any case, we have fixed clear and inflexible bounds: we refuse absolutely all direct personal participation in war and in its social and moral preparation. But several of us employ still other means of fighting against it. I refer, for instance, to the Dutch movement of the Manifesto refusing direct and indirect military service, which cost several of its signatories, both men and women, the loss of their social position and created for others all sorts of difficulties; to the Ponsonby Action, begun

in England and spreading widely throughout Germany—and there are still others. Moreover, a few of us have already decided individually to refuse to pay any taxes, whilst the organization of which I am a member has already several times been the propagandist of collective refusal of taxation. But whereas refusal, even on a very restricted scale, to do military service has been morally and socially efficacious, the refusal to pay taxes by a restricted number of citizens only has so far had very little result, as the authorities, in confiscating property and inflicting fines, take possession of sums much larger than a direct payment of taxes would have brought them. From this point of view, your compatriots have already given some impressive examples of collective refusal, although they also were not able to avoid the regular exactions of the Government.

However it may be, in the struggle against the oppression of the coloured races, we are *at one* with you. I even belong to an organization which has participated in this struggle already since the beginning of this century (1904). We are endeavouring to do away as soon as possible with the relation of "cat and mouse" existing between the different races of humanity without, however, wishing to replace them by the relations of cat and dog. That is why we not only object to violent tendencies amongst our own people and race, but we also exhort other peoples and races, who are not defenceless mice but moral beings, not to let themselves be seduced by violence, but to adopt those higher forms of combat which, for centuries past, have been recommended on moral grounds by the most sublime representatives of humanity, and the practical significance of which you yourself in particular have taught us.

As for your expectation of a Great Britain reborn from a moral point of view, it seems to me that you would favour this regeneration more by siding with the most radical of the British war resisters, instead of hoping for salvation from a so-called socialist Government which is inevitably condemned to play a fatal political role in the international imperialistic development. You will already have noticed how, under Macdonald likewise, the persecution of your compatriots who are fighting for their rights and liberty continues. However amiable may be the manner in which you speak to the British rulers and however benevolent may perhaps be the tone of those who

answer you, they will, nevertheless, only try to satisfy your people by an apparent and fictitious solution.

I have esteemed you too highly, venerated Gandhi, to content myself with merely taking note of your "unconscious weakness" as you so kindly propose that I should do, but what I tried up to now to do is to reply to your arguments by other arguments. It is in the desire that you may be able to revise your attitude in the past and the present that I have written to you, and that I do so again today. The life of the world has become such a unity, that national interests cannot be really understood nor served except from the point of view of the universal interests of all humanity. This, moreover, is the summing up of everything that I have laid before you.

Onex, Geneva, 5, XII, 1929

Young India, 30-1-1930

IV

NON-VIOLENCE THE ONLY WAY

(*By Richard B. Gregg*)

[I share with the reader the following letter from Mr. Gregg, the author of several books on *khadi* and non-violence. He is an industrious and accurate student of world events. The reader may know that Mr. Gregg was in India long enough to study things Indian. M. K. G.]

Those two articles of yours in *Harijan* on the Czechoslovak situation and threatened war in Europe * have my entire agreement and approval. I am sorry that there are still members of the Working Committee who think that freedom of any group or nation could be won by bargaining to permit violence. Can they not see that the hour when the British Empire goes to war, fascism becomes established in every corner of it by virtue of the necessities of modern totalitarian war, and that dictatorship is never voluntarily abandoned, no matter what the promises may be at the start? In view of the myriad of violated promises dating from the beginning of the World War, how

* Chapters 60 and 61 in this book.

can they believe that a promise glibly given by a system in danger of its life can possibly be fulfilled when its fulfilment means suicide? The kind of change of heart you seek by *satyagraha* could hardly take place in such an atmosphere of fear and hatred.

The spectacle of what is happening in Europe does not in the least upset my faith in non-violence. All that has happened in the past twenty years proves up to the hilt that violence does not win anything worth while, and that whatever it creates is most unstable. Who now has won the World War — the Allies or Germany? Who believes that the conditions now being established in Germany and the rest of Central Europe by means of violence will be permanent? Nor can Japan create stable conditions in China by her present tactics.

Modern war is very different from even that of 1914-18. The use of airplane bombing with high explosives, incendiary and poison gas, plus anti-aircraft guns, means that the bombers have to fly so high that they cannot aim accurately. Hence, modern war is not only vastly more destructive, it is also vastly more indiscriminate in its attack. In former wars the women, children and aged were mostly unharmed and at home, and able to carry on most of the habits of normal life. Now they are even more defenceless than the soldiers. There are no longer any front line trenches. Everyone is, in effect, in the trenches. A wise general always kept certain troops in reserve, and never threw them all into battle. But modern militarists are compelled to throw the entire nation into danger of destruction. There may be no reserve to carry on and re-establish civilization after a modern war.

A modern thermite bomb cannot be quenched by water. It burns at a temperature of about 2,000 degrees and melts its way through steel beams and eight inches of solid concrete cement. Not even Spain has shown the full horrors of modern war. Incendiary bombs have been used there only twice; probably as an experiment, by the Germans, and gas bombs not at all. The Germans developed a new and terrible form of attack from the air, in which the planes rose to a great height of about 20,000 feet where they were invisible from the ground; and at a distance of about 75 miles from the city they were aiming at, they shut off their engines, thus becoming entirely silent and

incapable of detection by even the most delicate sound recorders. They coasted that 75 miles and dropped high explosive bombs upon the city of Barcelona without the slightest warning. I have seen photographs of the results. Defensive measures against that form of attack are utterly futile. Modern war is not men fighting against men ; it is men, women and children exposed to the limitless violence of machines and chemicals. To pretend to fight that is not bravery but utter folly. I do not mean to pile on the horrors. I mean to point out that *satyagraha* is the only weapon left. Science and machinery have really ended militarism. Some stupid people may not yet see it and may try another European war. It will only result in destruction such that only the humble dark-skinned races and nations will be left to carry on the torch of human culture. *Nothing* worth while can be defended or maintained or promoted by modern war.

I pray that you may be able to keep India out of entering any war whatsoever. In order possibly to help you with some unconvinced friends, I am sending you a little book by a distinguished British thinker, Bertrand Russell. It is called *Which Way to Peace* ? In it he first sets forth the nature of modern war, mostly by quotations from the experts. Then he examines in turn each of the proposed ways out — collective security, isolationism, alliances, the policy of expedients, wars of principle — that is, wars for democracy, to end war, to end fascism, to promote any great political principle. His analysis is clear and cogent. Against his will he was driven to the conclusion that complete pacifism is the only possible practical policy. He does not develop the possibilities of *satyagraha* at all, just leaves the matter there. And he is not a religious man at all, and is far more pessimistic about human nature than you or I. I commend it to you as a brilliant and thorough piece of analysis, and likely to be helpful to you, if you are going to discuss this topic further.

I have also read and agree with your article 'What Are Basic Assumptions?' in *Harijan* of October 22. Let me tell you how modern scientific researches have supplied knowledge which backs up the faith of a *satyagrahi*.

A great English investigator named G. Elliott Smith and his followers and collaborators have deeply studied the evolution

of the human brain and nervous system, and compared it diligently with the corresponding evolution of the nervous system of animals. It has been proved beyond doubt that man is the only animal in whom the nerves of sensation do not end in the lower nerve centres along the spine, nor in the hinder portion of the brain called the cerebellum which controls all involuntary movements, nor even in a further advanced part of the brain called the corpus striatum, but go on through and past these to cerebrum, the front part of the brain where we do our thinking. Also, in connection with this fact, discriminatory action, as distinguished from involuntary instinctive movements, is initiated also in the cerebrum, the part where we do our thinking. This second fact is proved not only by the anatomy of the nerves, but also by the fact that the human baby, as distinguished from the young of most animals, cannot walk at birth but has to watch its parents and elders until it acquires an intellectual pattern of walking. After we learn how to walk we do not delegate that activity to our lower nerve centres. It still continues an activity of the cerebrum, even though habit makes its control unconscious most of the time. This is proved by the fact that when that part of the cerebrum is organically and physically injured by an accident to the head or by degenerative disease there, then such a person can no longer walk, even though all the rest of his brain and nervous system is intact.

From this I deduce the conclusion that, by his very anatomy, by the structure of his nervous system (in which all men of all races and nations are alike), man is compelled to seek the truth, to find what will work in his life here on earth with other men, to learn all the subtle forces as well as the obvious and readily observed forces that play upon and control our total life. No dictator can change human anatomy. It means of course that, since man is thus controlled by his thinking, if he makes an intellectual error, it may cause appalling losses and suffering. But it also means that, no matter what disasters may come upon him, man has to pick himself up and search on again for a more complete and accurate vision of the truth. Man's spiritual nature and his emotional nature are also a part of the truth. Nazis and Fascists have the same nervous systems as democrats or communists. To me this gives a further strong

basis for optimism, and for faith in *satyagraha.* I submitted this deduction of mine to a distinguished physician who is in close touch with all the modern research in this and other medical fields, and he said he thought my conclusion was right, although he preferred to state it in terms of a very high degree of probability, just as cautious scientists are now stating the law of gravity only as a very high degree of probability.

By way of historical examples of the *satyagrahi's* faith that non-violence will be effective even against people trained in modern totalitarian ideas, it is interesting to know that the few Quakers in Germany have been interfered with less than any other religious group, apparently because the German people remember still with gratitude the relief work of the Quakers towards the Germans during the starvation days of the Allied blockade after the war. Also I have read in the actual history of a prisoner in a Nazi prison, who later escaped, that a great service rendered by one of the prisoners to the Storm Trooper guards of the prison resulted later in their secretly saving his life when he was being tortured by the officers in charge of the prison.

While it has not yet been tested for a whole nation, I believe that disciplined *satyagraha* by a considerable number of people in a nation can win its freedom, and with that method can go on to build better civilization for mankind to emulate and thereby save the world.

It seems to me that the Western nations are mistaken in condemning Germany with such moral indignation, for Germany's deeds now are the natural result of the way the Allies treated Germany during and after the war, by such methods as the nine months' naval blockade of Germany, which caused the death by starvation of nearly a million German children and women, and similar starvation in Austria, and the impossible financial indemnities levied as pretended punishment on Germany, and all the self-righteous accusations that Germany alone caused the war, and the humiliations of many other sorts forced upon her and her leaders. It has created in Germany a form of morbid feelings and thinking allied to insanity. It is futile as well as wrong to condemn an insane person for his acts, especially if I have caused his insanity. A Chinese proverb says that a wise person uses other persons as his mirror. Germany

is the mirror held up to the Allies, in which, after a lapse of time, they are seeing the reflection of the evils within themselves. They recoil with horror, but their horror, if it were understood, would be directed at their own disharmonies and shortcomings.

To jump to another aspect of the European situation, a number of keen observers, both in America and at Geneva, have stated, from reading the British White Paper and comparing it with Lord Runciman's activities and other straws in the news, that they believe that two weeks before Hitler's Nuremburg speech Runciman had told Sudeten German leaders that he was going to recommend to Chamberlain that Czechoslovakia should be dismembered, that this was transmitted to Hitler, who then knew that Chamberlain was tied to what Runciman would advise, so that Hitler knew that he could threaten war and compel Chamberlain to yield. Without all the supporting evidence, which I do not have space here to add, that may seem like an unbelievable state of affairs. I can say assuredly, however, that the great majority of American opinion is that the British Tory Party believes that, if Hitler's prestige were severely shaken or he were defeated in a war, Germany would have a revolution and become Communist, and that Communism would hurt the British ruling class more than Nazism or Fascism. Therefore Chamberlain was ready to do anything to avoid war. That is, that the Tory party has put its class interests above its imperial interests, and has compelled France to follow suit. I look for a long period of black reaction in England and France.

To put the matter in another form, it seems to me probable that the modern methods and weapons of war now threaten the safety of the ruling classes as much as that of the masses, both directly because of the indiscriminateness of modern weapons, and indirectly because of the much greater danger of revolution and destruction of civilization by war. The weapons will be kept as a means to terrify the masses (an English girl, who was in London at the time of the crisis, told me that the panic in the East End of London because of fear of air raids was exceedingly great, though of course no mention was allowed to be made in the papers). The masses, if terrified, can be made to adopt any sort of repression under the guise of protec-

tion against air raids. If the weapons are used, they will be turned not against another nation but against the working class. Capitalism is in its period of decline and desperate. As long as violence is threatened, the holders of power will do anything to keep their position of relative control, even though it means a general impoverishment in which they too share. Only by means of full-fledged *satyagraha* can they be altered, I believe.

Well, you can see that I do not have much hope for Western civilization. Your beliefs are going to be proved true much faster than anyone conceived likely. Your programme of *satyagraha*, *khadi*, Harijan reform, Hindu-Muslim unity, village industries, and revised education through handicraft, is not only absolutely sound, it is the hope of India and the hope of the world. For there is coming a great economic breakdown in the West which will make *khadi* as much needed there as it is in India.

Because of these beliefs I want to write this additional book on which I am now working, in an attempt to develop suggestions for methods of training in non-violence better than my pamphlet, answering criticisms and doubts of the programme, integrating the philosophy and the methods, and showing the importance of manual work. It cannot cover it all, but, as in the other instance, I am trying to put it all in Western terminology and concepts. In the disruption of former modes of sentiment and action, I believe there is very great need for a firm new philosophy of a better way of social living and the way shown how to bring it about. Access to Western libraries is necessary for this writing. I hope that such a book could be useful in India as well as in the West.

Perhaps I am mistaken, perhaps I am deceiving myself, but anyhow for that purpose I am staying on here, taking a risk of possible moral harm to myself, and a risk that war may break out and prevent my getting this written or published. If I am mistaken, I will pay for it in my next and succeeding incarnations.

I do intend to come again to India to see if I can help there. I cannot disengage myself from India, nor do I want to. Believing as I do that your movement is the hope of the entire world, I feel that as soon as I can get this book done I can thereafter help even my own country best by trying to help strengthen

the movement in India. Just how soon I can get away I cannot tell. I want to see you and be with you again. Please forgive me that I do not start instantly. I am trying to use my abilities for you in the best way I can see. So much trouble and suffering come from people being unable to think clearly on these problems. I am trying to clarify thought.

I have a number of ideas as to how possibly I might be of aid after I get there, but they would all be subject to the needs as they actually are at that time. Even if I could not help much, I would like to be there.

Harijan, 24-12-1938

V

WE ARE TREATED AS SUBHUMANS—WE ARE ASKED TO BE SUPERHUMAN

[The following is an abridgement of the article by Mr. Hayem Greenburg from the *Jewish Frontier* referred to by Gandhiji in his article "The Jewish Question"—Chapter 77, page 205, in this book.]

In his article concerning the Jewish question, a statement for which certain elements in Jewry have long waited with impatience, the spiritual leader of *Young India* directs against us two important accusations. He blames us for not exhibiting the heroism of militant pacifism in those lands where Jews are persecuted, and especially in Germany. On the other hand he accuses us of following an aggressively nationalist—almost imperialist—policy in Palestine and of a desire to deprive the Arabs of their fatherland.

Gandhi's first accusation is quite natural and is in complete harmony with his entire world outlook. His temperament does not tolerate passivity and his ethical-religious convictions dictate to him the duty of heroic and active resistance according to the Indian principle of "Satyagraha".

The motivating idea of "Satyagraha" is not, as some claim, a practical strategy which Gandhi "made to order" to meet the concrete demands of the Indian situation. Long ago he advocated it as a universal ideal which could be applied by all the oppressed and injured everywhere and independent of the

specific historical situation. Personally I feel that the individual and group struggles according to the plan of "Satyagraha" — aside from its moral-religious implications — have proved to be practical and effective. The truth of the "Satyagraha" teaching — which in another form has been expressed by Jesus and other Jewish teachers many generations ago — is in my eyes as self-evident as a mathematical axiom. But I must admit to myself that in order to apply Gandhi's method of struggle it is necessary to accept it not only on a purely intellectual plane; it is also imperative that it be assimilated emotionally, that it should be believed in with all the force of one's being. Such faith the Jews of Germany do not possess. Faith in the principle of "Satyagraha" is a matter of special predisposition which, for numerous reasons, the German Jews have not developed. The civilization in which German Jews have lived for so many generations, and to the creation of which they have so energetically and ably contributed, has not prepared them for the "pathos" of "Satyagraha". As a result they are now defenceless. The accepted defence methods of the European-American world cannot be applied by the German Jews. They cannot resort to passive resistance because they lack the heroism, the faith and the specific imaginative powers which alone can stimulate such heroism. When Gandhi accuses German Jews of lacking that mentality which, in his estimation, is the only truly heroic mentality, I am ready to concur with him, but with one reservation which he also must accept — that this accusation should also be levelled against the millions of non-Jewish Germans who wear the yoke of the Hitler regime with impotent hatred and show no more affinity for "Satyagraha" methods than do the Jews; against the millions of Italians who for years have breathed the contaminated air of their own tyranny; against the tens of millions of Russians who have exhausted their strength in civil war and do not find their way to the Gandhi method of resisting the red despotism; against hundreds of millions of Chinese who by their military resistance aid the Japanese aggressors to ravage their country instead of following the path of non-co-operation.

It is true that one may demand, as Gandhi does, that Jews, and particularly the Jews of Germany, should be the "pioneers" of new forms of social struggle in the Western world and should

be the first to embrace the practice of "Satyagraha". Gandhi wishes that we should set an example to the non-Jewish Germans, that we should point the way to a spiritual crusade against their wicked Government. He may have a sound reason for believing that the incomparable suffering and degradation to which German Jews are subjected "compels" them to act more heroically and to be more "adventurous" spiritually than their neighbours. I do not question the idea implicit in Gandhi's demand that there is a mutual relationship between the intensity of suffering and the intensity of the moral reaction to suffering. But there is reason to assume that when suffering and insults transgress certain bounds it is quite natural that the reaction should be a feeling of futility and despair instead of that heroism which Gandhi suggests. This is especially true when the group concerned is historically and psychologically not prepared for such a catastrophe and therefore looks upon it as a sudden and unexpected occurrence. The prophet of *Young India* has in this instance exhibited an unusual lack of psychological understanding.

Gandhi should also have understood that it is far less simple to preach "Satyagraha" to German Jews than it is to Indian masses, even to the lowest caste of "untouchables". We all know the evils of English rule and administration in India. But one should be wary of drawing comparisons between the situation of the Indian masses today, or even twenty years ago, and the position of the German Jews today.

* * *

A Jewish Gandhi in Germany, should one arise, could "function" for about five minutes—until the first Gestapo agent would lead him, not to a concentration camp, but directly to the guillotine.

If Gandhi demands heroism from the Indians, he demands of the German Jews a measure of super-heroism unexampled in history. Gandhi's comparison between the situation of the Indians and that of the German Jews contains an element of unfairness which crept in against his will and against his intentions.

But if Gandhi demands that we practise super-heroism in Germany, he requests that in Palestine we should renounce the

most elementary rights which every people may and should claim. When he asks why we do not "like the other peoples of the earth" make our home in the land where we were born and where we earn our livelihood, he indicates that he has not pondered the unusual drama of the paradoxical Jewish history. Jews have been dispersed for many generations, and it could not be an accident that after sojourning in so many lands and with so many peoples they have not become so rooted in those countries that these should cease being "stepmother lands".

* * *

But Gandhi refuses to recognize our right to a distinct territorial settlement, a right which is enjoyed, almost without exception, by all the peoples of the world. Were it not so, he would see the Palestine problem in an altogether different political and moral light. For when he says that "it would be a crime against humanity to reduce the proud Arabs so that Palestine can be restored to the Jews partly or wholly as their National Homeland," he forgets that, if national honour is at stake (this is the burden of his statement, and he knows full well that one may not repeat the discredited allegations of economic or cultural harm that Jews supposedly caused to Arabs), he should also have thought of Jewish honour. Either it is dishonourable to be a minority in a country or it is merely a question of fictitious prestige for which he can have no sympathy. If only pseudo-honour is involved, why should he be concerned lest the "proud Arabs" be deprived of the enjoyment of an inflated pride? But if real national honour is at stake, why should the Arabs enjoy it throughout the length and breadth of the Arabian peninsula, Iraq, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan, and Egypt (an area almost as large as the European continent), while the Jews should be deprived of this honour, even in an area which occupies about one per cent of the above-mentioned land; an area to which they have historical claims and the natural right they acquired during two generations of diligent work, initiative, heroism and suffering?

From a purely legalistic point of view, it may be possible to agree with him that "the mandates have no sanction but that of the last war." This does not mean, however, that the basic idea of the mandates, and the mandatory system as it has been practised during the past twenty years, was born from

the war. The idea underlying the mandate which, according to the constitution of the League of Nations, should be applied in territories where the population is not ready for self-government, or where local interests must be subordinated to more important considerations of an international character, is potentially of great humanitarian significance. It is a prelude to that "civil society" of which Franklin wrote in the eighteenth century; it is a way to a more rational and just collective international control of the world's wealth. I am not unaware of the shortcomings with which the League of Nations is weighed down nor of its sad fate during recent years which also brought misfortune to all humanity. But whoever observed closely the activities of the League in the administration of mandated territories—naturally excluding those areas mandated to Japan, a country which cynically mocked League control even when its representatives were still sitting at Geneva—must admit that the mandatory system is a step forward when compared with the uncontrolled colonial regimes of the past and the present. The fact that a mandatory Government is responsible to the Permanent Mandates Commission, in which the majority of the members represent governments possessing neither mandates nor colonial possessions, is in itself an advance in the direction of internationalism and the humanization of the world.

It is regrettable that Gandhi approached our problem without that fundamental earnestness and passionate search for truth which are so characteristic of his usual treatment of problems. He therefore missed the deeper implications of the Mandates system. He therefore also failed to grasp the unequalled tragedy of Jewish existence. This is the reason why he can justify the phenomenon of five Arab States demanding in London the establishment of a sixth one on the eve of the founding of two other sovereign Arab governments in Syria and Lebanon, while at the same time sanctioning the denial of refuge to Jews in their old home.

This also explains his stand that Arabs must nowhere be reduced to the status of a minority while tens of millions of Russians, Poles, Czechs, Germans, Irish and Italians live in dozens of countries as ethnic minorities and while Jews live as a persecuted minority on the entire globe.

With all my respect for the Mahatma (I doubt if there is

another living man who evokes within me such a moral awareness of his loftiness) I cannot help feeling that in the present instance he has betrayed his inner nature. I cannot avoid the suspicion that, so far as the Palestine problem is concerned, Gandhi allowed himself to be influenced by the anti-Zionist propaganda being conducted among fanatic pan-Islamists. His understandable and praiseworthy desire for a united front with the Mohammedans apparently misguided and blinded him to significant realities and deprived him of that analytical clarity which is a part of his moral being. Years ago he was, for the same reason, misguided into supporting the agitation for the re-establishment of the Khalifate, an institution that is at such variance with his general views. Gandhi was wrong then; he is also mistaken in the present instance and the source of these mistakes seems to be the same.

Harijan, 27-5-1939

VI

GANDHIJI ABSOLVED

The following is the full text of the Working Committee's declaration of policy :

The Working Committee have been deeply moved by the tragic events that have taken place in Europe in startling succession and in particular by the misfortunes that have befallen the people of France. These events have already had far-reaching consequences, and they are likely to be followed by other happenings which will lead to novel situations and complex problems.

Ever since the commencement of European war the Congress has followed a policy which was based on its principles and on the attitude of the British Government towards the demand that India should function as a free and independent country. This policy was confirmed in the Ramgarh resolution. The manner of the application of this policy will necessarily depend on the situation which changes from day to day. Problems which were distant are now near at hand and may soon demand solution. The problem of the achievement of national freedom has now to be considered along with the allied one,

its maintenance and the defence of the country against possible external aggression and internal disorder.

The war in Europe, resulting from a desire for imperialist domination over other peoples and countries and a suicidal race in armaments, has led to human sorrow and misery on a scale hitherto unknown. It has demonstrated the inefficacy of organized violence, on however vast a scale, for the defence of national freedom and the liberties of peoples. It has shown beyond a doubt that warfare cannot lead to peace and freedom; and the choice before the world is uttermost degradation and destruction through warfare or the way of peace and non-violence on basis of freedom for all peoples. Mahatma Gandhi has presented to the peoples of the world, crying for relief from the crushing burden of war, a weapon in the shape of organized non-violence designed to take the place of war for the defence of a people's rights and freedom against armed aggression. He feels that at this critical phase in the history of man the Congress should enforce this ideal by itself declaring that it does not want that India should maintain armed forces to defend her freedom against external aggression or internal disorder.

While the Working Committee hold that the Congress must continue to adhere strictly to the principle of non-violence in their struggle for independence, the Committee cannot ignore the present imperfections and failings in this respect of the human elements they have to deal with, and the possible dangers in a period of transition and dynamic change, until the Congress has acquired non-violent control over the people in adequate measure and the people have imbibed sufficiently the lesson of organized non-violence. The Committee have deliberated over the problem that has thus arisen and have come to the conclusion that they are unable to go the full length with Gandhiji. But they recognize that he should be free to pursue his great ideal in his own way, and therefore absolve him from responsibility for the programme and activity which the Congress has to pursue under the conditions at present prevailing in India and the world in regard to external aggression and internal disorder.

Many of the problems which the Working Committee have considered in this connection are not of the present, though they may be of the near future. The Committee wish to make it clear

that the methods and basic policy of non-violence in the national struggle for freedom continue with full force and are not affected in the least by the inability to extend it to the region of national defence.

The War Committees that are being formed are definitely aimed at increasing the war effort. In view of the Congress policy, they cannot be supported, and Congressmen cannot participate in them or contribute to war funds, nor can Congressmen associate themselves, under present political conditions, with Government-controlled Civic Guards.

Congress committees should organize, wherever necessary, people in villages and other areas for self-defence and in order to maintain a sense of public security in their respective areas. This should be done on a non-communal basis and in full co-operation with all other groups interested in this task.

In view of the difficult times that loom ahead, it is essential that the Congress should function as an active and disciplined organization. Provincial committees are enjoined to take necessary steps for this purpose. They should realize that it is of urgent and vital importance that the Congress should function in this way in these days of crisis, and should not be merely a roll of vast numbers of inactive members. All members of the executive committees, in particular, are expected to take a continuous and active part in the Congress work, and those who are unwilling or unable to do so are failing in their duty to the country and are of no service to the organization.

The critical situation that faces the world today requires vigilant attention and action whenever needed. For this purpose the Working Committee will meet at frequent intervals, and all members must keep in readiness to obey an urgent summons. The All India Congress Committee should be summoned to meet in the last week of July.

Harijan, 29-6-1940

VII

WHAT LED TO THE DECISION

A Historical Retrospect: 14 Years

Gandhiji's decision to be responsible no longer to guide the deliberations and policy of the Congress may have come upon the members of the Working Committee and upon the country with a certain amount of suddenness. But it was the natural conclusion of a series of events since 1934 — or may I say since 1919? For his warning to the people first came to be uttered after the mob violence in Nadiad and Ahmedabad. He shocked his followers and amused his critics by proclaiming that in placing the remedy of civil disobedience in the hands of people who had not learnt the discipline to listen and to obey he had been guilty of a Himalayan blunder. Then came Chauri Chaura and the momentous Bardoli decision suspending *satyagraha* indefinitely. This gave the followers an even greater shock than that given by the "Himalayan blunder". But Gandhiji was adamant. He knew that the country would realize the wisdom of the decision in course of time, and that it would be able to prepare itself for another struggle. It took the country six or seven years — years punctuated by communal rioting and internecine strife—to develop non-violent strength to hurl defiance against the Government. We had learnt the virtue of non-violence, but it had with most of us a limited meaning and content. And yet it carried us through to a certain amount of success. Then came more organized repression on behalf of the Government, our limited non-violence proved a poor match for it, and with that came the third milestone on the march to non-violence — I mean the Patna decision of 1934 suspending civil disobedience and confining it only to himself.

Throughout this period of fourteen years he belonged to the Congress, he was a member of it, he attended meetings of the A. I. C. C. and of the Working Committee, and actively participated in the deliberations. But the Patna decision had set him thinking. Always anxious to lay the blame principally on himself, he had begun to discover that the arrest in the growth

of the Congress and the corruption in its ranks was due to the fact that the Congress "had degenerated into an organization dominated by one personality, and that in it there was no free play of reason." There were vital differences between him and the Congressmen, but his personality, he felt, had acted like an incubus on them and prevented their self-expression. That was unconsciously encouraging hypocrisy and a subtle piece of violence. Khadi and the spinning wheel were there on the Congress programme, "yet only a few Congressmen have a living faith in the India-wide potency of the wheel." And as for non-violence, as he said in his historic statement issued in September 1934, "after fourteen years of trial it still remains a policy with the majority of Congressmen, whereas it is a fundamental creed with me. That Congressmen do not still regard non-violence as a creed is no fault of theirs. It is undoubtedly my faulty presentation, and still more its faulty execution, that are responsible for this failure. I have no consciousness of faulty presentation or execution, but it is the only possible inference from the fact that it has not yet become an integral part of the lives of Congressmen." We had paid lip-loyalty to non-violence, and even that non-violence was not of the strong but of the weak. "If we were non-violent through and through, our non-violence would have been self-evident. Nor were we able to show to the terrorists that we had greater faith in our non-violence than they in their violence." The argument led irresistibly to the conclusion that he should leave the Congress organization as he was convinced that by being outside he would serve the Congress and the country better than by being in it. That was the fourth milestone — the step to withdraw from the Congress being solely dictated by the idea of making the experiment of non-violence in thought, word and deed more intense. "For this experiment," he said, "I need complete detachment and absolute freedom of action. I can only search Him through non-violence, and in no other way, and the freedom of my country, as of the world, is surely included in the search for Truth. I cannot suspend this search for anything in this world or another." The wisdom of the decision, which was so to say ratified by the Bombay Congress, was proved by a very simple test. The amendment suggesting the substitution of the words "truthful and non-violent" for "peaceful and legitimate" was

that simple test. The amendment was thrown out by the members of the A. I. C. C., and proved clearly the thinness of the faith of the bulk of Congressmen in truth and non-violence.

He retired from the Congress in October 1934 and threw himself with redoubled zeal and vigour into the only kind of work that was an expression of non-violence — revival and development of village industries, Harijan service, education through basic crafts, and fixing up one's abode in a village which offered in a nutshell all the problems of an Indian village. But this retirement was far from giving him the "complete detachment and obsolute freedom" of action that he was longing for. For three years he had a certain amount of respite, but the decision to accept offices, taken by the Congress on his advice, drew him once again into active leadership.

1934-39

Every step, throughout the period of fourteen or fifteen years, had been for him an experiment in the pursuit of truth and non-violence, and his advice to the Congress to take up the burden of office acceptance was another such experiment. The office acceptance was not intended to work the Act of 1935 *anyhow*; "in the prosecution by the Congress of its goal of complete independence, it is a serious attempt on the one hand to avoid a bloody revolution and on the other to avoid mass civil disobedience on a scale hitherto not attempted." He declined to have any authority over the ministers or to have any power to issue instructions to them, but "in matters relating to the struggle for Swaraj through non-violent action, I do claim special qualifications. For me office acceptance has a special meaning even in terms of the Congress manifesto and resolutions." The Congress was not only to replace an alien Government, but an alien method of governance. It was to rule, he made it clear in the very beginning, "not through the police backed by the military, but through its moral authority based upon the greatest goodwill of the people. It will rule, not in virtue of authority derived from a superior armed power, but in virtue of the service of the people whom it seeks to represent in every one of its actions."

That was said in August 1937. Since then every pronouncement of his has been a commentary on the principle of action laid down in the very beginning. Trouble in the Sholapur

Settlement of "Criminal Tribes" and labour unrest in Ahmedabad and Cawnpore gave him the first occasion to sound a warning. "Do we really believe in truth and non-violence, in sustained work and discipline, in the efficacy of the fourfold constructive programme? If we are not sure of our own chosen aims, we need not wonder if one fine morning we discover that we had committed a grave blunder in embarking upon office acceptance. My conscience as *a* or *the* prime mover in the direction of office acceptance is quite clear. I advised it on the supposition that the Congressmen as a whole were sound not only on the goal but also on the truthful and non-violent means."

In 1938 came further storm signals, and they gave Gandhiji the opportunity of making the Congress position further clearer. The ministers were to rule by moral authority based on the greatest goodwill of the people, but what was the meaning of that goodwill? The Congress claimed to represent the whole of India, not only the so-called Congressmen — to represent meaning to serve their interests. And in that sense it had to serve the interests of non-Congressmen even better than those of Congressmen, if it was to be true to its creed of non-violence. "It should represent even those who are hostile to it and who will even crush it if they can. Not until we make good that claim shall we be in a position to displace the British Government and function as an independent nation." These words were uttered two years ago, but it seems as though they were uttered yesterday. The bulk of the Muslims and others belong to the non-Congressmen's camp. Have we the power — the non-violent power — to represent them today? If we have, we can function as an independent nation in spite of Britain.

But to proceed. The riots in some of the cities of the U. P. and the steps taken by the Congress ministry to quell them made Gandhiji pointedly ask the question: Is Congress non-violence, non-violence of the weak and the helpless or of the strong and the powerful? "If it is the former, it will never take us to our goal, and if long practised may even render us for ever unfit for self-government. If the Congress non-violence does not come out of real strength, it would be best and honest for the Congress to make such a declaration and make the necessary changes in its behaviour. To the extent that the Congress ministries have been obliged to make use of the police and the

military, to that extent, in my opinion, we must admit our failure."

His soul had already begun to get impatient. How long would this experiment last, how long could he continue to give his guidance if it was ultimately to be futile? We discover this impatience of the soul in numerous utterances of those days. To some co-workers he said: "I am ashamed that our ministries had to call to their aid the police and the military. I am ashamed that they had to use the language that they did in reply to the Opposition speeches. I feel as if the Congress had lost and the British had won. Why does our non-violence fail on such occasions? Is it the non-violence of the weak? Even the *goondas* should not move us from our faith and make us say: 'We will send them to the gallows or shoot them down.' They too are our countrymen. If they will kill us, we will allow them to do so. You cannot pit against organized violence the non-violence of the weak, but the non-violence which the bravest alone can exercise. We have, you will say, been sufficiently non-violent. We were non-violent during the civil disobedience campaign, we received *lathi* blows and worse. My reply is this: We did, but not sufficiently. We could not get independence at the end of the Dandi March, as ours was not the unadulterated non-violence of the bravest."

The question of external aggression has cropped up just now, but the question of internal unrest was already there as alive as today. Had we the strength then to say to the *goondas*, "Kill us, we will not kill you"? We had not. But Gandhiji lived in the hope that we should have that strength soon. "Supposing," he said to the Gandhi Seva Sangh people at Delang on the 25th of March, 1938, "the Viceroy were to invite the President of the Congress to meet him and to state the Congress terms, do you think he would have the strength to say, 'The Congress is capable of taking charge of the administration, the British may go'? Do you think we could tell him that we should be able to do without the police and the military, that we should be able to come to terms with the Princes, the Zamindars and the Mussalmans? I am afraid we could not honestly say we should easily be able to come to terms with these. And yet, if we had real non-violence in us, we should be able to say and do these things."

But if the situation was bad in the middle of 1938, it is worse in the middle of 1940. Someone asked Gandhiji the other day: "You think we have not the non-violence of the brave. Well, then, I ask you what would you do if independence were to be offered to you today? Would you say no?"

He said: "I would say no. I am giving an absurd answer to an absurd question. The question is absurd, for independence is not going to be offered, because we are not ready. If we were ready, it would be there without our asking it."

But I am anticipating events. There was impatience in the soul, but he was patient with the people. He was arguing with the ministries, arguing with the people. "In spite of our having accepted the volunteer's pledge for 17 years we have not developed the irresistible strength that such acceptance of *ahimsa* means. The reason is that we have not troubled, we have not laboured, to organize such a non-violent army. If we cannot do so, if we cannot carry out the pledge, it would be well to reconsider our position. The tragedy is that the pledge is still in existence, but it exists on paper. If we had on a sufficient scale such a non-violent army as the pledge contemplates, we should not have had these riots; and if there had been, we would have quelled the riots or immolated ourselves in the attempt. We have heard of only one man who met his death. I admire his self-immolation. But my breast would have swelled with joy if there had been several Guptas."

"If," he said in an article written in that period, "the Congress non-violence is merely confined to abstention from causing physical hurt to the British officials and their dependants, such non-violence can never bring us independence. It is bound to be worsted in the final heat. Indeed we shall find it to be worthless, if not positively harmful, long before the final heat is reached." And then this solemn warning: "If we feel that we shall not be able to displace the British power without a violent struggle, the Congress must say so to the nation and prepare accordingly. We must do what is being done all the world over — *forbear when we can, hit when we must.* If that is to be our creed or policy, we have lost precious seventeen years. But it is never too late to learn and mend."

The long tours of the Frontier Province that followed were with the sole purpose of preparing the promising field for the non-violence of the brave.

And it was not that the ministries wholly failed.
What's done we partly may compute,
But oft not what's resisted.

If we were to go minutely into the history of the work of the Congress ministries in the eight provinces, we would find that they had some triumphs of non-violence to their credit. But God fulfils Himself in many ways. If the ministries had continued, would they have been ultimately found wanting? May it not have been providential that the situation created by the war came as a godsend and compelled the ministries to resign? Who shall say? But again I am anticipating events.

A Narrow Escape

The test had nearly come with the international crisis of September 1938 and the rape of Czechoslovakia. But the dictated peace at Munich saved us. The Working Committee sat and deliberated for some days, but the test in the shape of war did not come. Gandhiji placed the implications of non-violence before the Working Committee in a manner that could not be mistaken, and the Working Committee was so unanimously with him that he was in a position to report: "The Working Committee had almost come to the conclusion that it would deny itself the opportunity of striking a bargain with England, but would make its contribution to the world peace, to the defence of Czechoslovakia and to India's freedom by declaring to the world by its action that the way to peace with honour did not lie through mutual slaughter of the innocents, but that it lay only and truly through the practice of organized non-violence even unto death."

And in the course of a private conversation he used words which had a prophetic ring, at least so far as he himself was concerned:

"You may rest assured that whatever happens there will be no surrender by the Government. For me, even if I stand alone, *there is no participation in the war even if the Government should surrender the whole control to the Congress...* Who would have thought aeroplanes to be a practical reality

fifty years ago? Who would have imagined in this country, thirty years ago, that thousands of innocent men, women and children would be ready smilingly to march to prison? The weapon of *ahimsa* does not need supermen or superwomen to wield it; beings of common clay can use and have used it before this with success. At any rate fifteen members of the Working Committee did express their readiness to put their *ahimsa* to the test. That was more than I was prepared for."

But we were not weighed, and our honour remained intact. At any rate we did not die before our death. What the Committee would have done if the crisis had actually come it is difficult to say, but as we have seen it filled Gandhiji with great hopes.

The Crisis

Exactly a year after this the crisis was upon us. In that first hour of trial, the Congress was weighed and not found wanting. It did not take the Working Committee long to issue its mandate to the Congress ministries to resign. Gandhiji heaved a sigh of relief. The questions that frequently tormented him ceased to trouble his soul. If the Congress had accepted his advice, in the initial stage, of offering unconditional co-operation, or if later the British Government had acceded to the Congress demand for a declaration and the Congress had offered co-operation in response, the position for Gandhiji would have been the same. For the co-operation he had contemplated was *moral* co-operation and no other. But who knows? It may be that even there there has been providential intervention. If the Working Committee had then taken the stand — the very honest stand indeed — that it has taken now, the difficulty both for the Committee and for Gāndhiji would have been immense, the situation more delicate. But as I have said God intervened.

The crisis in the shape of the collapse of one European nation after another in quick succession came none too soon. Gandhiji had waited in patience so long, trying to steer a difficult course through rocks and breakers. He had voluntarily accepted the position of the Generalissimo. Was it wise? The speeches at the Ramgarh Congress were a mirror of the struggles of his soul. In private he had implored the Working Committee and the Maulana to relieve him of the position. It was simply with a view to being able to render greater service to the

Congress. "I am putting upon myself an undue strain, but as it is not yet a strain on my conscience, I shall continue to serve you, if you will insist on my doing so. But it is a terrible strain, and I would implore you to free me. I should then pursue my experiment of *ahimsa* with absolute freedom." I am quoting from memory, but that was the substance of his entreaty to the Working Committee. And when they did not relieve him he poured out the depths of his soul in the two speeches at Ramgarh.

But the soul's impatience continued. Would the Working Committee face or quail before the coming storm? Perhaps they were taken by surprise, but not Gandhiji. The European situation had for him a lesson that was unmistakably clear. "It fills me with the utmost non-violence," he said. "I cannot think of a better thing to offer to Britain and the defeated nations than non-violence. It is impossible for me to enthuse over the deeds of Hitler or of those who fought or failed to fight him. There is nothing to choose between the victory of Hitler and the defeat of others. But I have no doubt in my mind that even a patched-up non-violent army would take the wind out of Hitler's sails. I need not have his aeroplanes, tanks, etc. He need not destroy our homes. Our non-violent army would welcome him, and it may be that he would not dare to come. I know that this may be a day-dream. But I cannot belie the principle of a lifetime or wipe out my day-dreams of the past twenty years. If we have not the non-violent strength of the brave to fight anarchy and aggression, let us say so and reduce ourselves to a small minority hoping to develop non-violence of the strong in the days to come."

The Working Committee did some fierce thinking for days. Those were the days of heart-searching for them. The logic of Gandhiji's propositions was invincible, but could they go with those propositions to the people? Were they so thoroughly saturated themselves with the spirit of non-violence of the brave to be able to carry conviction to the people? Gandhiji even drafted a resolution for them. But fain as they would have it, sorely as they felt the wrench of having to do without his leadership and his advice, they could not be untrue to themselves. "We feel we could not accept your position with our mind and heart and soul, and we feel we should not entangle you," they said to him in effect. "And if that is so, why should

we accept an untenable position merely to retain your connection? It would be a fraud on ourselves and others."

But if they could not be untrue to themselves, neither could Gandhiji be untrue to himself. He said to them: "I must be left free for my self-expression. I must be free to pursue my search, and I know you will believe me when I say that I go only to be of more effective service to the Congress, to you and the nation. Of course I shall be available when you want me. But I can no longer identify myself with the direction of your policy and programme. You will, therefore, try your best to do without me and have your meetings in future not in Wardha but elsewhere."

It was said of old by a Teacher to his disciples: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" Had those who for us have been "the salt of the earth" lost their savour? One cannot say. But there were these words also uttered of old: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid." And they may yet be those lights. In the meanwhile Gandhiji waits and prays in silence. "I should work single-handed in implicit faith that what I fail to make clear to my countrymen today shall be clear to them some day of itself or, if God wills it, through some apt word He may put in my mouth, or some apt work which He may prompt me to do." These words were uttered in 1934, but they might have been uttered only the other day.

M. D.

New Delhi, 1-7-40
Harijan, 13-7-1940

VIII

A. I. C. C. RESOLUTION

The following resolution was passed by the A. I. C. C. at Bombay on 16th September, 1940:

The All India Congress Committee has given its careful attention to the events that have taken place since its last meeting held in Poona on July 27, 1940, and to the resolutions passed by the Working Committee at Wardha in August last. The Committee approves of and endorses these resolutions.

In order to end the deadlock in India and to promote the national cause, in co-operation with the British people, the Working Committee, even at the sacrifice of Mahatma Gandhi's co-operation, made a proposal to the British Government in their Delhi resolution of July 7th, which was subsequently approved by the A.I.C.C. at Poona. This proposal was rejected by the British Government in a manner which left no doubt that they had no intention to recognize India's independence, and would, if they could, continue to hold this country indefinitely in bondage for British exploitation. This decision of the British Government shows that they will impose their will upon India, and their recent policy has further shown that they will not even tolerate free expression of public opinion in condemnation of their associating India in the war against Germany, against the will of a vast body of the people of India, and of exploiting her national resources and man power for this purpose.

The All India Congress Committee cannot submit to a policy which is a denial of India's natural right to freedom, which suppresses the free expression of public opinion, and which would lead to the degradation of her people and their continued enslavement. By following this policy the British Government have created an intolerable situation, and are imposing upon the Congress a struggle for the preservation of the honour and the elementary rights of the people. The Congress is pledged under Gandhiji's leadership to non-violence for the vindication of India's freedom. At this grave crisis in the movement for national freedom, the All India Congress Committee, there-

fore, requests him to guide the Congress in the action that should be taken. The Delhi resolution, confirmed by the A. I. C. C. at Poona which prevented him from so doing, no longer applies. It has lapsed.

The A. I. C. C. sympathize with the British people as well as the peoples of all other countries involved in the War. Congressmen cannot withhold their admiration for the bravery and endurance shown by the British nation in the face of danger and peril. They can have no ill-will against them, and the spirit of *satyagraha* forbids the Congress from doing anything with a view to embarrass them. But this self-imposed restraint cannot be taken to the extent of self-extinction. The Congress must insist on the fullest freedom to pursue its policy, based on non-violence. The Congress has, however, no desire at the present moment to extend non-violent resistance, should this become necessary, beyond what it required for the preservation of the liberties of the people.

In view of certain misapprehensions that have arisen in regard to the Congress policy of non-violence the A. I. C. C. desire to state this afresh, and to make it clear that this policy continues, notwithstanding anything contained in previous resolutions which may have led to these misapprehensions. This Committee firmly believes in the policy and practice of non-violence not only in the struggle for Swaraj, but also, in so far as this may be possible of application, in free India. The Committee is convinced, and recent world events have demonstrated, that complete world disarmament is necessary and the establishment of a new and juster political and economic order, if the world is not to destroy itself and revert to barbarism. A free India will, therefore, throw all her weight in favour of world disarmament and should herself be prepared to give a lead in this to the world. Such lead will inevitably depend on external factors and internal conditions, but the State would do its utmost to give effect to this policy of disarmament. Effective disarmament and the establishment of world peace by the ending of national wars, depend ultimately on the removal of the causes of wars and national conflicts. These causes must be rooted out by the ending of the domination of one country over another and the exploitation of one people or group by another. To that end India will peacefully labour, and it is

with this objective in view that the people of India desire to attain the status of a free and independent nation. Such freedom will be the prelude to the close association with other countries within a comity of free nations for the peace and progress of the world.

Harijan, 22-9-1940

IX

SEVEN DAYS IN BOMBAY

The Seven Days

An author of the history of the Russian Revolution wrote some years ago, in diary form, a history of the happenings of the ten days that preceded the birth of Soviet Russia. He gave that book the title *Ten Days That Shook the World*. May it not be that the seven days in Bombay—12th to 18th—may come to be recorded in history as the Seven Days That Shook the World? And in a better sense perhaps? The days in Russia had all the colour and terror of a revolution. The Seven Days here had a different character altogether. They were as peaceful as anything can be, and they mark a distinct stage not only in India's march towards peaceful freedom but also perhaps in the march of the world towards peace.

The whole setting was one of peace and not of war. For even if it was a gathering of men who were determined on war for the assertion of their right to self-existence, it was a gathering of people who would not hurt even a fly. The Government had, therefore, no need for any elaborate police — not to say of military — preparations in anticipation of what might happen. Those who met were the guests of a most peaceful body of people — the East India Cotton Association, who do not usually interest themselves in politics but who at this unique juncture in the history of India braved the risk of being regarded as having identified themselves with politics. For they knew that the issue at stake concerned them no less than the rest of India, perhaps more.

The Working Committee was facing the hour of the greatest crisis in Congress history. The days since June 18 when they

issued what is known as the Wardha Statement had been days of excruciating travail both for them and for Gandhiji. For Gandhiji they had been days also of intense prayer. I may not produce here a diary of the seven days, but Pandit Jawaharlal in his speech at the A. I. C. C. described in one or two sentences what had happened. He was in bitter pain over the wild and irresponsible utterances of a handful of the members of the Committee, and was trying to plead with them to see the error of their ways. "You know," he said, "what Gandhiji has done? He has accepted full responsibility for the resolution. But do you know how it came into being? How great he spiritually is I do not know. But I know that politically he is without a peer. So far as matters of principle are concerned his iron will will not bend to any appeal for a compromise. But he listened to us for hours, let every aspect and argument that we had to press work upon his mind. He produced one draft and then another and then a third until he saw that he had met the considerations advanced by every one of us, and was not content until the result was a resolution that was as far as possible the collective reflection of the mind of us all." (I am not quoting his words, I took no notes, but I am giving the impression left on my mind by his moving speech.)

And as one could see it, Gandhiji seemed to grow from moment to moment. He took two hours to produce the first draft which became the basis of the resolution as it ultimately emerged. He did not know that, in spite of the intense mental labour that he had devoted to it, his draft reflected the minds of the members. When he addressed the house in Hindi, though he spoke in firm and measured tones there was trepidation and hesitation. "The responsibility I am assuming," he said, "is perhaps the greatest I have ever assumed in my life. I do not know whether I shall succeed in satisfying you or even satisfying me. Nor have I the vaguest notion of the result. But for over 50 years I have trained myself never to be concerned about the result. What I should be concerned about is the means, and when I am sure of the purity of the means, faith is enough to lead me on. All fear and trembling melt away before that faith, and once we have launched forth there is no looking back." In the English speech the firmness seemed to have increased, the soul in him cried out: "We have waited

long enough. Now comes the moment when the virtue of waiting has become vice." And yet he said: "There is impenetrable darkness before me regarding the future course of action. Would you trust your ship to a captain who is groping? If you would, well and good. Otherwise reject his generalship summarily." For days he had waited for light, but beheld obscurity. A glimmer had appeared on the horizon with the confidence with which he advised the Working Committee. But still there was a pall of haze. The next day it had lifted, and he was able to declare almost in the exaltation of certitude: "The thing I have placed before you is not small. I myself had thought it was small. But it was not so. It has not come from my intellect. It has come from recesses of the heart where dwelleth the Innermost. It is He who has given it. It was born at the end of infinite travail."

Verily once more the words of the Psalmist had come true: "Light is sown for the righteous and gladness for the upright in heart."

When Virtue Becomes Vice

I have in brief given the setting in which the event happened. I shall now proceed to give the outstanding portions of his three utterances. They have appeared at length in the Press, but as they are unpruned and unauthorized, one is apt to miss the wood for the trees. Mine will be a rapid summary with pauses at passages of outstanding importance.

An esteemed friend had sent him a telegram on the eve of the decision reminding him of the attitude of sympathy and of unconditional co-operation that he had adopted at the beginning of the war. He had not forgotten it. But if he could not take the mind and the heart of the Congressmen with him, that attitude would have been useless. "If what I said did not find an echo in their hearts, they would have been of no use whatsoever to the Viceroy, to the great British Nation, and to India." But even after the first resolution on the war adopted at Wardha they had waited for exactly a year. He was not sorry that they had waited, the waiting had been all to the good, it had given him at any rate the strength to adopt the attitude he was taking. Why did the very man who had day in and day out advised non-embarrassment now stand before them with the latest resolution? He said: "There comes a time in man's life when

virtue itself becomes vice. Virtue which was virtue in its time, when torn from the purpose to which it was dedicated, becomes vice. The exercise of self-restraint was good enough, but when it threatened our very existence, the national spirit, whether it abided in Congressmen or non-Congressmen, when it threatened to kill the very spirit which enabled us to exercise self-restraint, then that virtue becomes vice." He proceeded: "I am speaking not only for the Congress, but for all who stand for national freedom — Muslims, Parsis, Hindus, Christians — even for those who are against the Congress, so long as they represent Indian aspirations, viz. unadulterated independence. I should be untrue to all of them if I said now, 'No embarrassment to the British.' My repetition of it would be just as useful for my salvation and for the guarding of my virtue as the repetition by a parrot of God's name which is but a mechanical vocal effort without intelligence, and which cannot take him near to God. Therefore, if I exercised that self-suppression at this critical moment in the history of the nation, it would be suicidal, I should be untrue to myself. We cannot sit still when we see men like Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia and Jaiprakash Narain, than whom I know no braver or straighter men, being marched to jail not because they preached violence but because they carried out the behest of the Ramgarh resolution. It had become a point of honour with them. It is not *satyagraha* to watch thus people being marched to jail in the exercise of their right of freedom of speech. If we looked on, the Congress would disappear and with it the national spirit. India, said the Maulana, at the time of Nankana tragedy, was one vast prison, and therefore, if we delivered her, we would easily be able to free not one but all the *gurudwaras*. If our liberty of speech is choked, the movement for the freedom of our country from bondage is choked. Then, as I have said, the virtue of self-restraint is going to become vice. The virtue cannot be exercised, as the resolution says, to the extent of self-extinction — extinction of the national spirit, wherever it resides whether amongst Congressmen or non-Congressmen."

We Learnt It from You

Further exercise of self-suppression, he explained, would be an act unfriendly to Britain. We have learnt, from Englishmen, to value the priceless boon of freedom of speech. In

expressing his sympathy for Britain and his admiration of the bravery of the British, Gandhiji brought this point out in a striking way: "We have sympathy for all the suffering nations in this war. I wish well of Britain. The destruction of a single innocent child in England shocks me. When I heard of the impending damage to St. Paul's I felt as much as I should have if the Kashi Viswanath and the Jumma Masjid were in a similar plight. I know the sentiment that surrounds St. Paul's. The news therefore shocked me. But what can I do beyond saying that it has shocked me? In spite of the shock, the British people are playing and dancing and carrying on their business as usual, and we are told that an eleven year old lad writes to his father that he would far rather be destroyed in England with his parents than seek refuge in Canada. That fearlessness is in their bones, and if we have learnt anything from them it is that. Even if London and the whole of the British Isles were to fall, they have the courage to carry on the fight from Canada, Australia or New Zealand. Therefore let us emulate their bravery, let us not be carried away by our sympathy to the extent of neglecting our clear duty."

That duty is to declare from the house-tops that we shall have none of this war, we shall do nothing by way of providing men, money or ammunition for the conduct of the war. To let the Viceroy tell the world that the whole of India is with Britain in this war, is to allow him to deceive the world. If the war was being fought for democracy, with what justice can that claim be advanced when democracy was being trampled to death in India? Dominion Status was being promised, but the Provincial Autonomy that was given to the provinces under their own Act was reduced to a mockery. In his impassioned Hindi utterance he asked: "Was Punjab consulted? Was Bengal consulted? Was Sind consulted? Was the Frontier Province with a population of over 90 per cent Mussalmans consulted before India was declared a belligerent? Were the people in these provinces asked whether they wished to join the war? How can one man, however good, be invested with so much power over nearly 40 crores of people? I am a friend of the Viceroy and hope to remain his friend until the end of my days, but the situation created by imposing him as a virtual dictator on India is intolerable. It is a negation of democracy."

The Demand

The Congress has during the past one year exhausted all the means in its power to bring about an understanding with Britain. It asked for a declaration of India's independence. It declared that it would be content if British Government were prepared to accept a constitution framed by a Constituent Assembly. It offered a third alternative, and in doing so almost stultified itself, nearly went back, as it seemed to me, on the solemn professions of the past 20 years of its existence. It was pledged to winning Swaraj by non-violence; it forgot that in promising Britain its active co-operation in the war effort in case Britain recognized India's independence, it was contradicting itself and offering to pay the price of its principle — for the sake of independence. But happily even that offer was rejected. Now comes the fourth offer in the field: "Simply declare that India is free to carry on, non-violently and openly, anti-war propaganda, that India is free to preach non-co-operation with Government in their war effort, and we will have no civil disobedience."

That is the lowest possible test of their honesty. Civil liberties are the very foundation of democracy, and if you deny them you deny democracy. Only the other day a British judge defined the essence of democracy. Delivering judgment in an action brought against *The Daily Worker*, Mr. Justice Stable observed: "The expression of views, no matter how unpopular, how fantastic or how wrong-headed they may appear to the majority, is a right, and a right which I, among others, are paid to see preserved. I subscribe wholeheartedly to the words that fell from the lips of Mr. D. N. Pritt, K. C. (defending counsel), that it is those views which are held by only a few, those views that are unpopular, those views which do run counter to the views of the great majority of mankind, particularly in times of national emotional crises such as war, it is those views which this court should be particularly zealous to protect." It would seem that what is going on in India is the most flagrant negation of this elementary principle of democracy.

This is how Gandhiji put it in his direct simple language: "In order completely to clarify our position, I propose to approach the Viceroy, if he will be good enough to see me — and I have no doubt that he will — and to place my difficulties before

him. I will approach him in your name. I will tell him that this is the position to which we have been reduced. We do not want to embarrass you and deflect you from your purpose in regard to war effort. You go your way, and we go ours, undeterred, the common ground being non-violence. If our advice prevails, there will be no war effort on the part of our people. If, on the other hand, without your using any but moral pressure you find that they respond, then we cannot help it. If you get assistance from the Princes, from the zamindars, from anybody high or low, you can have it; but let our voice also be heard. If you do so, it will be eminently honourable; it will certainly be a feather in your cap. It will be honourable of you — although you are engaged in a life and death struggle — that you have recognized this liberty. It will be honourable of you that you do so although you have limitless powers to choke our voice and give us the fullest possible freedom, consistently with the observance of non-violence, to tell the people of India not to join the war effort."

That is the position that would put the Congress and the British Government at ease with one another. As Gandhiji put it: "The British can then say to the world, 'Judge us by our conduct. Here in India we are playing the game.'"

What of Freedom?

Then, it may be asked, what about our demand for independence? Independence is contained in the right to declare and preach non-co-operation with the war effort. "That liberty," he said, towards the close of his speech, "is the foundation of your Swaraj. If that foundation-stone is in danger, you have to exert the whole of your might to defend that single stone." He explained this thought at greater length in his closing speech:

"I am sorry that your mind has failed to grasp a very simple but a very important point that I made yesterday. I described the right of free speech as the foundation-stone of Swaraj. Let me explain this. I have yet to come across a complete definition of Swaraj. I do not think I have been able to give it myself. I do not think even Jawaharlal has ever given it. It is possible that someone from amongst you may be able to give it, as it has often happened that others have defined for me things I have been labouring for. If anyone can do so,

I shall gladly make him my *guru*. But this resolution contains the seed of Swaraj. If you hold fast to it, all that the movers of the various amendments desire is automatically attained. If we can win this liberty of free speech — either by fighting for it or by negotiation — we have secured everything — free speech for a communist like Dr. Ashraf, and free speech for a Forward Bloc-wallah like Sardar Sardul Singh. If I give it a religious colour, I can call it full religious liberty, the liberty cultural and religious that the Muslims are asking for. You say you want independence. But you forget that it is beyond their power to give it to us. Nor can we be independent by simply declaring that we are independent. We can be independent only when, after the British have left, we can remain unafraid and rule ourselves unafraid of any attack from any foreign power — Japan, Germany, Russia or Afghanistan. It is absurd to launch civil disobedience today for independence. How are we to fight for independence with those whose own independence is in grave peril? Even if independence can be given by one nation to another, it is not possible for the English. Those who are themselves in peril cannot save others. But if they fight unto death for their freedom, if they are at all reasonable, they must recognize our right of free speech. This they can certainly do. It is our duty to fight for that right. If they resist it and we have to fight and they are embarrassed, they will have invited embarrassment themselves.

"This liberty is a concrete issue which needs no defining. It is the foundation of freedom, especially when it has to be taken non-violently. To surrender it is to surrender the only means for attaining freedom.

"When Rajaji told me that his own offer was easier for the British to accept than mine, he was expressing half the truth. It may be easy indeed for them to recognize our independence, but I can understand, during the war, their reluctance to grant us central responsible government. For once they grant it, they have to carry on through us. One day it may be Rajaji, another day it may be Jawaharlal, and then it may be a Damodar Menon. This co-operation that we offer them would be to them a commodity of doubtful value, for they do not trust us, and if I was in the Viceroy's position, I should understand his misgivings. It is risky for them to carry on war through those whom they

do not trust. But where is the risk in letting everyone declare that he is free to refuse all co-operation in war and preach that non-co-operation to everyone he comes across, unless they want to enforce co-operation at the point of the bayonet ? "

The Only Limiting Condition

But the right sought to be asserted is subject to the condition that we observe non-violence. " The condition is necessary, because a Government that is based on violence cannot tolerate violence. That is the unavoidable logic of violence. But even those who are violently inclined need not despair, if they will listen to me today. For if we win Swaraj through non-violence, even the violent, if there are any, will have not only the liberty to preach but to do violence. There would be no army. But that will not prevent a Sikh or a Khaksar from possessing a sword or swords. If the rest are all believers in non-violence, what violence can these inflict ? The restraint of speech and action of the majority will automatically exercise similar restraint on those who are contrarily inclined. At any rate, if I had my way as the president of a non-violent Indian republic, I should not hesitate to give those who are violently inclined, the liberty of violent speech. On the other hand, let me tell them that under a violent State they cannot expect that liberty.

" Let me tell those who want mass civil disobedience, strikes, no-rent campaigns, that they forget that all those things are there in our old resolution of 1920. In fact I have been striving all these years to prepare the country for all these things. We should have been able to do all of them and to bring about a new social order by now, if only we had observed the conditions. And if we did not observe the conditions and were not ready, none but we were to blame.

" But you are free to organize mass civil disobedience if you like, though you will then be guilty of indiscipline. But, as I said to Subhas Babu who put me the same question, I shall gladly congratulate you if you succeed, but you cannot have my blessings. Of course, the honourable course for you would be to leave the Congress.

"But you know that you cannot organize mass disobedience at the present stage without violence. For similar reasons I am asking students not to leave colleges to join *satyagraha*, unless

they will leave them for good. Similarly about strikes. Dr. Suresh Bannerji, who was once a co-worker but who has for some years strayed away from me but seems now to be coming back, said to me some time ago that only I could conduct a labour strike to a successful conclusion. I can do all these things, if I have your full co-operation and complete discipline."

The Effect

As regards the immediate effect Gandhiji said: "When we come to our own, the Government will be in charge not only of the Congressmen but of non-Congressmen. There will be adult suffrage, and the Government will be formed by the elected representatives of all the adult voters — Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Jews, and those whom we foolishly have regarded as untouchables. What a mixed parliament of these representatives will do I do not know. But I hope that the Congress vote will always be in favour of non-violence. If it is in a minority, it will record its vote; if it is in a majority, it will administer the State non-violently. For the Congress as Congress can do nothing else. Supposing the Government accepts our demand tomorrow and says: 'Do what you like in future, but now please do help us with men and money.' I am afraid even then we shall have to say to them: 'We are sorry we cannot give the co-operation. We wish you well, and may God help you. But committed as we are to the policy of non-violence, nothing that you can offer can persuade us to give you violent assistance.'"

In the interval between now and Gandhiji's return from a visit to the Viceroy, what is to be done? Gandhiji said: "I am going to see the Viceroy, but I may fail in my mission. I have never approached a mission in despair. I have approached it with the consciousness that I may be faced with a blind wall. But I have often penetrated blind walls. But if I fail, we shall be free to assert our right to carry on anti-war propaganda and take the consequences. You are of course free to carry on the propaganda from now, but it will not be fair, it will not be restraint. I would, therefore, ask you to be patient until my return from the Viceroy."

Since this was written, the Working Committee passed the following resolution which leaves no manner of doubt about the Congressmen's duty during the interval:

"In view of the resolution just passed by the A. I. C. C., the Working Committee calls upon all Congress organizations to stop all civil disobedience, individual or other, pending definite instructions of Gandhiji. He regards this suspension as indispensable for his pending interview with H. E. the Viceroy, and as a test of the discipline of registered and unregistered Congressmen and all Congress-minded men and women, and also as a short course of obedience to law before recourse to civil disobedience, should it become necessary."

The Hindu-Muslim Question

In his closing speech Gandhiji referred to the Hindu-Muslim question, as it had been raised during the debate. He said: "If a conflict is there in store for us, who can prevent it? We have to be prepared even for anarchy and chaos, but we must have the faith that non-violence cannot result in chaos. But if some how disorders take place, they will be a test of our non-violence. Non-violence is a force that gains in intensity with the increase in the violence that it has to deal with. I hope that you will get that power of non-violence before I die. But there is a message I should like to reach the ears of every Mussalman. India cannot win independence, if eight or more crores of Mussalmans are opposed to it. But I cannot believe that all of them are so opposed, until it is proved to me by the vote of every adult Mussalman. Let them declare that they want to have their political salvation apart from that of the Hindus. India is a poor country full of Hindus and Mussalmans and others staying in every corner of it. To divide it into two is worse than anarchy. It is vivisection which cannot be tolerated — not because I am a Hindu, for I am speaking from this platform as representative of Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and all else. But I will say to them, 'Vivisect me before you vivisect India. You shall not do what even the Moghuls, who ruled over India for over two centuries, did not do.' What I have said about the Muslims applies equally to Sikhs. If 30 lakhs of Sikhs will obstruct Indian independence, we shall deal with them non-violently. Non-violent Swaraj cannot be won except by non-violence. There are other obstacles, too, imposed by the existence of an alien power. But we must strain every nerve to achieve communal peace. Islam means peace. That peace cannot be confined to the Muslims. It must mean peace for the whole world."

Implications of the Resolution

The representative of the American Associated Press saw Gandhiji in Bombay within twentyfour hours of the termination of the A. I. C. C. said: "Hundreds of our papers have printed the A. I. C. C. resolution and a summary of your speeches wired by me, and have commented on it. Four questions emerge out of these comments, and I seek your answers to the questions." Gandhiji was immersed up to the ears in work, and was actually attending a meeting of the Working Committee when Mr. Stimson arrived. He interrupted the meeting and dictated his answers to the four questions.

The first question was: "How do you desire not to embarrass Britain with your demand to preach anti-war propaganda in a non-violent way?"

Gandhiji said: "Because non-violence is the Congress creed which involves Congress hostility to all war. Hence it is a vital necessity for the Congress to dissociate itself from identifying itself with any war. Hence my desire not to embarrass Britain was necessarily limited and conditioned by the counter necessity of preserving the Congress existence, and therefore civil disobedience is definitely restricted to freedom of speech and action, provided they are absolutely non-violent. Therefore I have claimed in my speech that, if the full import of Congress action is understood, it must in the end help Britain and the world."

"Why," wondered Mr. Stimson.

"Because in the midst of the conflagration all round there is one powerful body pinning its faith to uttermost non-violence. If it succeeds, then the groaning world can heave a sigh of relief and find a way out of these monstrous armaments."

The second question was: "How do you visualize the future of India in the event of a Nazi victory ?"

A. All I can say is—I am not dismayed by the prospect, if my country remains true to the cult of non-violence. But that does not mean that I should be in any way pleased with the prospect of a Nazi victory. What terrifies me is that as things are going on at present defeat of Nazism will be bought at a terrific price, viz., superior Nazism, call it by any name you like.

Q. In view of what has happened in Malabar, is there any hope of mass civil disobedience being carried on non-violently ?

A. Not at present, and therefore, as you must have noticed, in my speech I made an emphatic declaration that so far as I was concerned there was no prospect of my embarking on mass civil disobedience. But if you ask me whether it is possible to conduct mass civil disobedience without its resulting in violence, I would emphatically say 'yes'. But my country is not at present ready for mass action, and in a way I am thankful that the unfortunate events in Malabar have come as a warning to the country and a pointer for me also.

Mr. Stimson's last question was: Does your policy mean disapproval of America's help to Britain in the shape of planes and munitions?

A. Not in the slightest. For the simple reason that America does not believe with the Indian National Congress in non-violent action. I wish it did. Then America's contribution to peace and help to Britain would be infinitely more substantial than any number of planes and any amount of material that America can supply to Britain. And if the weekly correspondence I receive from America and visits from Americans who come to see me is any index to American opinion, I expect America to take a leaf out of the Congress book and outrun the Congress in the race for the establishment of peace on earth through universal disarmament.

Am I Inconsistent?

The correspondent of *The News Chronicle*, who interviewed Gandhiji in Bombay on the 18th, saw him when he had already had a heavy day on the top of a night of insufficient sleep, and when he had heavy engagements yet to fulfil. But as he presented a conundrum on behalf of the British people, Gandhiji gladly found time for him and replied to his question which was as follows: "While expressing your sympathy with the British people in their plight, don't you think there is an inconsistency between your earlier decisions and your latest decision?"

"I thought," said Gandhiji replying to the question, "that I had clearly and sufficiently explained my position in my speech, in anticipation of the charge of inconsistency. If there is any inconsistency, it is due in this particular instance to changed circumstances. My sympathy is not only the same as it had been expressed in Simla on the declaration of war, it has

become deeper because what was imaginary had become vividly real. In Simla almost a year ago I had expressed my grief over what might befall Britain. Today the dreaded thing has happened and is still going on. By nature I am so framed that every calamity moves me irrespective of the people whom it may overtake. But my sympathy, even though it is deeper today than a year ago, has undoubtedly changed in form. I was unprepared for the recent Government declarations, and I claim that it is the genuineness of my sympathy which has made me single out the one fact which Britain can easily recognize and yield without any hitch in her prosecution of war. I readily grant that there might be some reason for not dividing the responsibility for the conduct of the war with those who are the determined opponents of British imperialism and all it implies, and therefore I felt that, if the Congress continued to abide by its policy of non-embarrassment which is inherent in its non-violence, the Congress should for the moment abate agitation by way of direct action for indepepndence. But freedom of speech and corresponding action is the breath of democratic life. Freedom of propagating non-violence as substitute for war is the most relevant when indecent savagery is being perpetrated by the warring nations of Europe. The Congress will forfeit all its right to be considered a non-violent organization, if out of false sympathy or what would be worse — fear of consequences — it ceased to agitate against the inhumanity that is being perpetrated in Europe and which, if not checked by somebody or some organization, may overtake the whole world. I hope this statement of Congress policy as I interpret it, as its sole guide, will not only satisfy the British public opinion, but will make it range itself on the side of the Congress, so as to enable the Viceroy to recognize the justice of the Congress claim, which is a claim not for itself but which is a claim for freedom of speech no matter by whom exercised so long as it does not promote violence in any shape or form."

M. D.

Bombay, 18-9-40

Harijan, 22-9-1940

X

MORE ABOUT THE RESOLUTION

For the Masses

In my hurried notes last week on the A. I. C. C. resolution there were certain points that I omitted and would like to take up this week. What has pained Gandhiji most about the Delhi resolution and the Poona resolution was not only that we would contradict ourselves by paying non-violence as the price of independence, when we had all along been declaring that we would win independence by non-violence; worse than that contradiction was the fact that the resolutions, if acted upon, would have been a sad betrayal of the masses whom for twenty years we had made non-violence-minded and whom we would now make war-minded. It is for the sake of them, he explained in his Hindi speech, that he welcomed the Bombay resolution. "For," said he, "the Congress strength is derived not from the members on the Congress registers but from the millions who have never entered the Congress but who feel that the Congress represents them. It is that character that makes the Congress speak for the Hindus, Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Jews and all. Throughout its history of over fifty years it has had not only Hindu presidents, but Muslim and Parsi presidents, who made no distinction between different communities, and who proved that those who rendered the highest service to the nation and who desired its freedom could take charge of it. The Congress had been described by some of its critics as a fascist organization. But if they admit that the Congress has no other weapon but non-violence, they disprove their charge. For Fascism, Nazism and Imperialism depend for their existence on violence. The Congress could not hold together without non-violence. Non-violence and *satyagraha*, its active principle, constitute the sovereign remedy which could be applied by all the minorities in the country, and which was for even the smallest minority a sure safeguard against the tyranny of the majority however big it might be. Non-violence was thus bound up with the very existence of the Congress, and to give it up would be to betray it and the masses for whom it stood."

A visitor recently asked Gandhiji if his re-entry meant that the Congress had become again non-violent at heart. "So far as I can say from things in the Punjab," said the visitor, "I think that, though there is a good deal of self-restraint, there is little non-violence."

Gandhiji replied: "I agree. The resolution is the result of several days' full-fledged debate among the members of the Working Committee. I may confess that many of the members have no independent faith in non-violence but they are trying to imbibe it. But you must know that the Congress is not merely the Working Committee, nor the A. I. C. C., nor the members on the Congress registers, but the dumb millions. They are all peace-loving, and we have to represent them truly. These millions, before the Congress identified itself with them in 1919, had taken no part in any violent or non-violent or even a so-called constitutional fight. But they rose like one man on the 6th of April 1919. They took up peaceful rebellion as their *mantra*, and without any organization, without any country-wide tour — for I had not then toured in the interior — they instinctively took up the call, and the Congress organization became a peaceful rebel organization. The Bombay resolution had these masses in mind."

No Threat

It is surprising that a paper should have accused Gandhiji of an intention to go to the Viceroy with the threat of civil disobedience. The very same paper published copious extracts from Gandhiji's speech from which the following are enough to prove that there was no such intention:

"There is one thing which is not mentioned in the resolution. In giving me the authority that the Working Committee has done, there is a reservation. I do not want to hurl civil disobedience or anything in the face of the Government without making my meaning clear, the meaning I attach to the sum total of Government actions — actions beginning with the declaration of the Viceroy, then the statement of the Secretary of State for India, and then the series of actions and the policy that the Government have pursued since.

The sum total of all these things has left an indelible impression on my mind that there is something wrong, some injustice, being perpetrated against the whole nation, and that

the voice of freedom is about to be stifled. It is there in the resolution, not in the exact language which I am using now, but you will see the meaning clear as day-light. In order completely to clarify our position, I propose to approach the Viceroy with a request that he will be good enough to see me, and I have no doubt that he will. I will place my difficulties before him; I will place the Congress difficulties before him. I will approach him in your name. I will tell him that this is the position to which we have been reduced: We do not want to embarrass you and deflect you from your purpose in regard to war effort. We go our way, and you go yours, undeterred, the common ground being non-violence. Left free to ourselves, there will be no war effort on the part of our people. If, on the other hand, without your using any but moral pressure you find that they respond, then we cannot help it. If you get assistance from the Princes, from the zamindars, from anybody high or low, you can have it; but let our voice also be heard. If you do so, it will be eminently honourable, it will certainly be a feather in your cap. It will be honourable of you, although you are engaged in a life and death struggle, that you have given us this liberty. It will be honourable of you that you take this great step although you have limitless powers to choke our voice, and give us the fullest possible freedom, consistently with the observance of non-violence, to tell the people of India not to join the war."

The Demand

While some have regarded the Congress demand as too difficult to be accepted, some have regarded it as too trifling. A talk that Gandhiji had with an *ashram* youngster may be summarized for the benefit of both. "If," asked the youngster, "the Congress demand is complete, it means that we do not need Swaraj, and that we shall be content with the liberty of speech and the Press."

"Our objective is complete independence, as you know. But do you know the means to attain it?"

"Carrying out the constructive programme."

"That is one of the principal branches of the tree. But what is the root?"

"Truth and non-violence."

"Well, then, we want the right to preach truth and non-violence."

"But will newspaper articles and speeches be enough for the propagation of truth and non-violence ?"

"No, we have to do much more. But the right to preach truth and non-violence is threatened. The law seems to say that we may not tell people that they have every right not to co-operate in the war effort, and that it is their duty as non-violent people not to co-operate thus."

"But you have yourself said that we can get Swaraj if we fulfil the constructive programme. Why then this trivial issue ?"

"It is not a trivial issue, it is a concrete and all-important issue. If we surrender it, a time will come when we may have to surrender all, when we may have to forget even the name of truth and non-violence. To preach these is our birthright, and to forfeit it is to forfeit our existence."

"But what I am troubled about is the emphasis on mere speech and writing."

"It is the liberty we claim. How and when to use it and whether to use it or no is our concern. If we cannot stand a strong breeze, we shut the windows and even doors. But how should we feel, if someone were to shut us up ?"

"I see. But may it not be imaginary ? If you ask a little child not to eat earth, it will eat it. It is the inhibition that is galling. Do you want to remove the inhibition ?"

"The analogy is wrong, for the little child has no right to eat earth, whereas no one has a right to prevent us from enjoying free air. But let me take another example for you, as you are a child. Prahlad was ordered by his father not to take the name of Rama (God). He might have argued with himself, 'I lose nothing by not repeating the name of Rama, for Rama is in my heart.' But if he had resorted to this argument, he would have deceived himself. He did not do so, and he defied his father to do his worst, he was not going to give up repeating *Ramanama*. And because he braved the most fearful hardships and dared even death for that sacred right, we have today a living faith in *Ramanama*. If he had yielded, that faith would have vanished from the earth. Even so, if we give up our right to preach truth and non-violence, we give it up for ever."

" But abstract truth and non-violence no one prevents us from preaching."

"No principle exists in the abstract. Without its concrete application it has no meaning. And when I want to preach non-violence I want to preach it as an effective substitute for war, and thereby to be able to wean Britain and other warring countries from violence and barbarism."

Why for All ?

" But," someone argued, " why do you claim that right for all ? In your speech you said that you would speak as a conscientious objector, but that others might use any reasoning they liked — e.g., the financial or the imperialistic argument."

" I have no business to claim the right only for myself and for those who are conscientious objectors. For some other grounds may be as important as, if not more than conscientious grounds ; and if I may not be smothered, how can I suffer those others to be smothered ? If, moreover, the liberty was restricted to conscientious objectors, we should compel a number of our people to be hypocrites, for they would take shelter under the conscientious argument. All that is necessary is the acceptance by all of the condition of non-violence. That cannot be relaxed."

A 'Columbus'

Twice during the past few days Gandhiji likened himself to Columbus, — first after the last Wardha meeting of the Working Committee, and then in his speech at the close of A. I. C. C. proceedings. On this second occasion he went into some detail in giving the comparison : " I do not ask you to appoint me your captain as a favour. I would entreat you to do a number of other things, but I do not entreat you to make me your captain. If you with eyes open and your minds clear feel that you should make me your captain, you may do so, not otherwise. For, unless I have your minds and hearts with me, we cannot reach the promised land. I am in the same predicament as Columbus when he started on his voyage to discover India. Perhaps I am in a worse plight in that I have no chart and no compass which Columbus had. I therefore ask for your implicit obedience and discipline as the ship's officers and crew. We have to be an army

in action tomorrow, and unless you give unflinching discipline, we shall be nowhere. A ship's captain never brooks indiscipline, and may even relieve the ship of the insubordinate crew."

It would be interesting for a moment to see the points of similarity and dissimilarity in the comparison. Columbus before he started on his voyage made himself admiral and assumed full powers as Gandhiji has done. His journey was perilous, and though he had a chart and compass, the journey was over uncharted seas. But the comparison ends there. The bulk of his 88 crews were criminals and vagabonds who had been given the choice between imprisonment and this perilous voyage. They were so indisciplined and wrong-headed that they did threaten to mutiny and even to push Columbus overboard some dark night. To control these men Columbus had to have recourse to deception, threats, promises! The very nature of our struggle makes these conditions impossible, and Gandhiji has promised in advance to make room for a better captain in case he fails, or even without, if people do not want him.

Sevagram, 23-9-40 M. D.
Harijan, 29-9-1940

XI

CREED v. POLICY OF NON-VIOLENCE

[More than a month ago Dr. Katju sent to Shri Kishorlal Mashruwala what may be called a short thesis on non-violence. The latter was to decide what to make of it and, if he liked, show it to me. Shri Mashruwala gave it to me some time ago. But I could get time to read it only during the journey. I read it carefully. It was too long for publication in *Harijan* ; and yet I felt that it should be placed before the readers of *Harijan* in some form. The following is the result. I have spent considerable time in reducing the original without leaving out the essential argument. I wholly agree with Dr. Katju that non-violence cannot make further headway without the Congress making it a creed. He suggests that there should be a plan to show how it can be worked under given circumstances. He suggested a book or a series for the guidance of the votaries. Much literature has sprung up on the subject. Richard Gregg has spent years of labour in research. He has written text-books for the guidance of the votaries of the West. His books are very readable. Let Dr. Katju set apart time for producing a book which would be a guide for us in India at this critical hour.

On the train to Wardha, 5-4-42 M. K. G.]

The efficiency of non-violence with non-co-operation as a potent instrument of defence against external aggression has been very much discussed during the last three years. Gandhiji has emphasized that what can win us our freedom from British control must also prove equally useful to protect that freedom from violent attack. But the Working Committee were not prepared to go that length, and they said so in the well-known Wardha resolution last year. They thought that the country was not prepared to go that length. In this, I think, the Working Committee were quite right.

The shattering events of the last two years in the present war have influenced men in different ways. From many, with the growing realization of India's utter defencelessness, there is an insistent demand for rapid 'militarization' and industria-

lization. On others, however, the reaction has been in a contrary direction, and they now realize vividly, as never before, the utter futility of resort to violence for purposes of defence. The collapse of strong, well-armed armies in Poland, Norway, France, Yugoslavia and Greece, and last of all the carnage in Russia, have shown to them — and I am one of those persons — that armed defence leads nowhere. If civilization and human liberties are to be saved, we must seek and ensure peace by means of non-violence. It is obvious that non-violence can be of no use to nations imperialistically inclined to conquer and exploit others. That, I take it, is not the ambition of any Indian. So the question is only of the defence of a free India.

It must be conceded that, though the Congress has been working on non-violent lines for the last twenty years, that has only been as a matter of policy. Leaving Gandhiji aside our leaders have not presented to the people the excellent doctrine of non-violence with all its possibilities and implications. Few, very few, have believed in it as a creed ; and anyone who advocates its adoption as a mere matter of policy is likely to break down at the critical juncture. I think that on those of us who believe in the matchless efficacy of non-violence and non-co-operation as an instrument of defence and protection against external aggression now rests the duty of infusing into, and inspiring, our countrymen with that faith.

Previous preparation is essential. Just as you cannot turn an ordinary citizen into a trained and disciplined soldier overnight or manufacture guns and aeroplanes in a week, similarly you require time and patience to train a whole people in the art of non-violence and non-co-operation.

Violence has stolen a long march during thousands of years. There are so many misconceptions to be removed. Non-violence is unintelligible to so many. To some it is a counsel of perfection, fit for *rishis* only. To others it is stupid ; there is seemingly such a childlike faith in violence. Non-violence ceases to be stupid when it is considered as non-co-operation. The present-day aggressor does not conquer in order to exterminate and settle down. He conquers or seeks to conquer in order to exploit, and it is at that stage that non-co-operation comes in.

We have to explain, to expound, to remove doubts, and to endeavour to make even the lame, the halt and the blind into

heroes. All this requires time and devoted effort. And this can only be done with any reasonable prospect of success by those who themselves have a firm faith in the efficacy of the method of non-violence and whose personal lives are regulated by that faith. You cannot possibly divorce this doctrine from the purest and highest morals. And no distinction should be drawn between personal and public affairs. What is ethically bad in an individual is equally bad for a community and a nation. We must believe that it is feasible to conduct public affairs on that basis, and we must ourselves act accordingly to the best of our power and ability ; and we must endeavour, by precept and example, to create a similar belief in our countrymen at large. Without this belief, I am convinced, non-violence cannot make any headway at all. Therefore those who advocate non-violence must live a life of non-violence, not resisting evil with evil but sterilizing it with non-co-operation. The non-co-operation has to be above reproach.

I am by no means pessimistic of success, if only those of us who profess faith in non-violence are true to our creed. All philosophy seems to inculcate non-violence and chastity in thought and conduct and love of truth. The masses will follow, if properly educated in the doctrine. The doctrine of *ahimsa* has ever been there, and people have, all through the history of the race, regulated their private life by it. It is Gandhiji's contribution to world welfare that he has taught us to apply non-violence and non-co-operation in the field of politics and public affairs also. This is a signal experiment and should succeed particularly in India if we proceed on right lines.

It is from this point of view that I suggest that, while we must endeavour by all truthful and non-violent methods to persuade our countrymen to cling to the path of non-violence to aim at conducting the government of the country by non-violent methods and to win our independence and retain and protect it by non-violence and non-co-operation, there should be no such thing as an effort to capture power in the vulgar sense of the word. The idea of 'capture' more often than not connotes use of Tammany Hall methods, political jugglery and cunning, and improper and corrupt practices. There is no place for these in our schemes of things. We can only succeed, if we have the people genuinely behind us. Political power, not resting on

the willing and genuine consent of a vast majority of the people, can only function, in the last resort, by the use of force and violence; and that use we forbid to ourselves. So our whole programme of action must be directed to persuade the people to our ways of thinking by methods of public education, study circles, public meetings, private discussions and the Press, and above all by our exemplary lives.

Insistence on mere non-violence without concrete action is apt to be misleading. You have all sorts of conundrums put before you to show that non-violence is merely another name for cowardice and timidity. This false notion is partly due to the fact that equal insistence is not laid upon non-co-operation. Non-violence and non-co-operation are two wheels of the chariot. And taken together they require the greatest courage and sacrifice in their votaries. It is the weapon, as Gandhiji is never tired of saying, of the bravest; and what is more, it is the bravery of spirit that is the requisite thing. Thus it permits everyone, man, woman and child, the strong as well as the weak in body, to avail of it, provided one is stout-hearted and firm of faith and devoid of fear. It is non-co-operation which gives power and strength to non-violence, readiness to die, and a determined refusal to obey and co-operate with evil.

Just consider our present situation. We blame Gandhiji for lack of complete success in our political struggle for freedom, and we cavil at the method he advises. But have we really followed his advice? Is not British rule in its entirety based on our own co-operation? Do we not serve our masters and often even take pride and glory in such service? The army, the police and the civil services are manned by us, and our brightest young men labour strenuously to put on such shackles and consider them adornments. We are ourselves — I refer particularly to the English-educated middle classes — the greatest sinners; and yet we blame Gandhiji. And has the method really failed? In spite of our tragic shortcomings, in spite of our weakness of faith, in spite of our half-hearted and apologetic pursuit of the method as a mere matter of policy, our success has been great indeed. The political awakening among the masses is marvellous.

The administration of a big country like India cannot be carried on by any foreigner, the Englishman or whoever he may

be, without Indian co-operation. And if that co-operation is withheld, foreign domination is not possible. This is the lesson we have to burn into our minds, the minds of the masses as well as of the classes.

It is in this sense wholly true to say that non-co-operation is a powerful weapon for the defence of the country against an aggressor. As I have already said, extermination is a thing of the past. Aggressors aim at exploitation by making the subject people work for them and for their profit. And work is co-operation. Non-co-operation will make exploitation impossible and thus aggression itself unprofitable. The process of non-co-operation — we are aware of it — will put our non-violence through terrific tests. But if we can stand assaults, torture and shootings without any retaliation or even an attempt at retaliation from our side and persist in non-co-operation, the struggle must end in success. Examples of such heroic sufferings are not wanting. Guru-ka-Bagh *morchas* of the Sikhs, the Dharasana episodes, and the behaviour of processionists at innumerable places are shining examples of the practice of non-violence on a large scale. And the struggle of Bardoli peasants for relief against excessive land taxes is a valuable lesson in non-co-operation.

Much is said, in order to terrify people, of the results of the use of violence by the invaders and aggressors. But the thing is obviously overdone. I believe in the first place that human nature, though often bad and vile enough, will ultimately recoil from persistent cruelty and torture and slaughter of non-resisting non-co-operators. Sufferings cheerfully borne will melt the heart of even a savage.

And after all does war — without non-co-operation — really sustain freedom ? In the first place, national policies based on force and violence as instruments of defence lead to a race for armaments, and that race by itself indubitably leads to war. Moreover there is no finality in armaments. The machine masters and ultimately overwhelms mankind ; and then what happens to the vanquished ? Once the army is overthrown and defeated, people are forced to surrender.

What we have really to show is that people can act courageously and suffer hardship and even death without the temporary stimulus, and indeed intoxication, of war. A well-or-

ganized mass movement based on non -violence and non-co-operation for the noble purpose of winning or retaining national independence must raise people, not only young well-built soldiers but even the old and the infirm and men and women alike, to greater heights than a bloody war ever can. It is the hearts of the leaders that doubt and quail, but the heart of the common people is sound enough.

Non-co-operation with the aggressor and the foreigner is plain enough. That will obviously involve the non-payment of taxes, a refusal to enter his service or do his bidding, a refusal to work in his mills and factories, and non-resort to his law courts. But it may become necessary even to non-co-operate with those of our countrymen, our own kith and kin, who flout the national will and co-operate with the aggressor. The thing to remember is that our non-co-operation has always to be non-violent and will, therefore, never do personal injury to the opponent. So there should be no interference with the supply of water to the thirsty or food to the hungry, medical assistance to the sick or burial to the dead. Within these broad limits a community is entitled to protect itself from its own backsliding brethren. And where public interests so demand, even filial and all family considerations must yield. National freedom is above everything. Human history teaches us that no nation has ever been able through violence to retain freedom and defend its independence against superior violence. Given the correct training, this is possible only through non-violent non-co-operation.

Non-violence is not a mere negative concept. It is essentially a constructive contribution to world politics. The present structure of society puts a definite premium on violence. Vast aggregates of private wealth in the hands of individuals who also constitute the ruling classes in the community naturally favour violence as a means of defence. It is now a commonplace that often so-called national interests are in substance nothing but the interests of private capitalists and investors in foreign lands. And even in local disturbances it is the moneyed man, the man of property, who shouts the loudest for the use of force for his protection. The adoption of non-violence as a national policy will inevitably involve a radical alteration in the social and economic spheres.

It is obvious that national wealth must be more widely and equitably diffused and social inequalities must disappear. Every citizen must have equal opportunities to grow. Much in socialism and communism will be found useful and admirable in a non-violent society, the basic difference being that a believer in non-violence holds that changes can be brought about by peaceful persuasion and non-violent methods, whereas those who profess the other doctrines do not share this faith and think that violent expropriation is the only course.

A believer in non-violence does not wish to abolish capitalism by violence. He wishes the community to avail itself of the results of individual enterprise, and he takes all sting out of capitalism when he converts a capitalist into a trustee for the benefit of the nation. If a capitalist were really to consider himself a trustee, he would never endeavour to swell his profits by sweating labour. If his wealth were ultimately to be applied for the benefit of the community, there would be no incentive left to enrich oneself by improper and Shylockean methods. He would, even in the process of earning his profits, genuinely endeavour to benefit his fellowmen as widely as possible.

The real considerations in a society founded upon non-violence may well be two-fold. Firstly, we have no outside countries to exploit, no foreign markets to capture, with the aid of our armies; and secondly, there must be profitable employment for every fit person. I do not think that in a free India the adjustment of industries will be beyond the bounds of human ingenuity. The needs of the hand-spinning industry will have to be particularly borne in mind, capable as it is of giving employment to millions of people who would otherwise be wholly without work. In planning an economic programme suited to our needs we can draw with great profit on the great social experiment in Russia. I personally believe that working on co-operative lines is the true way to national salvation and to non-violence also.

For the propagation of non-violence on sound lines it is necessary that a picture — at least in broad outline, but distinct and well-defined, not vague and shadowy — of a well-planned non-violent society should be drawn and placed before the public. Such a scheme would serve many purposes. It would educate and make people think, and the plan itself would benefit

by public discussion and criticism. As it is, people are left in doubt and do not know where non-violence will land them and India.

I realize that, like the experiment in Russia, the way to perfecting a plan of a non-violent society must be through trial and error. But basic principles must be settled and (as far as possible) precisely stated, and outlines well drawn. Shri Mashruwala has recently made attempts in that direction. His articles published in newspapers and magazines were both thoughtful and thought-provoking.

I dare say that adequate material for drawing up a preliminary outline as a basis of discussion for planned non-violence can be found in the writings of Gandhiji spread over a period of 40 years. Valuable hints can also be gained from Tolstoy and other eminent writers. But at present the material is all scattered, the picture much too hazy. Like the famous *Communist Manifesto*, we should have a manifesto of non-violence and non-co-operation.

The political and economical structure of non-violent society must be broad-based on the conscious will of the people as a whole. If force as a dominating sanction is eliminated, then cheerful and willing obedience to the national laws is the prerequisite to any durable constitution. People will only offer non-violent resistance to an aggressor, if they are proud of their country and prize their national freedom. But if national freedom merely means for a vast majority of the people a slavish, care-worn existence with ever-present fear of want and hunger, then it will not be surprising if there is not too keen a readiness to offer non-violent resistance and to die for an order of things which has done so little for the individual.

In a non-violent State there should not be any communal questions or any minority problems. When the highest rules of morality and ethics become the mainsprings of political policy and administrative action and non-violence actually becomes the foundation of national life, then there will not be the bickerings and rivalries and struggle for power with which we are nowadays so familiar.

The aim, it is said, of all good government is to cease to govern, for the State to fade away and for society to become classless. These aims can only be realized by genuine non-

violence. Government will be truly the government by consent. Problems of poverty and social amelioration confront all communities and require similar treatment. It is the fear that majorities will resort to the use of force and violence which poisons the air. The moment non-violence becomes the instrument of national policy the majority will have no sanction at its back other than the willing consent of the minority, and if it wishes to rule (if rule it can be called at all), it can only do so by winning the confidence and disarming all suspicion of the minorities. Indeed in a fully non-violent society there are no minorities, for all are one people.

The conclusion, in my view, is that in our present environment non-violence can only succeed as a creed and nothing else. Just as Soviet Russia made a deliberate attempt to alter the whole structure of society and to modify all the current and accepted notions of human nature by conscious State effort, similarly those who believe in non-violence and non-co-operation as the future hope of humanity must acquire power in the body politic in non-violent ways, and then endeavour to make non-violence the only essential instrument of our national policy. I personally think that the ideal of non-violence is not unrealizable. On the contrary I think that it can be reached, and that humanity, after the experience of the horrors of two world wars in the course of a quarter of a century, will willingly strive after it. But to attain that goal we shall have to educate public opinion in its favour, more particularly by radically planning the whole field of education on the basis of non-violence. We must begin with the child, and mould the mind of the coming generation accordingly.

So far non-violence (*ahimsa*) has been practised to regulate men's personal lives, and therefore one life, well-lived according to the principles of *ahimsa*, has influenced many others. But the sphere of influence has been limited to the region of private and personal affairs. Unfortunately, during thousands of years, mankind has been taught that private life and national life are things apart, governed by totally different principles. Gandhiji teaches us that there is no such distinction. That lesson can only be learnt by the people as a whole, if those in charge of national affairs first learn it themselves and then endeavour to impart it to others. I fear we have not done our

duty by the people. We have doubted and hesitated ourselves. How then can we blame the people? Let Congressmen first be firm believers themselves, give a little further time to the people in general, and then put them to the test.

K. N. KATJU

Harijan, 26-4-1942.

INDEX

Abu Bakr, 191
Abyssinia, 110-1, 129, 143, 164, 168
Adajania, Sorabji, 19
Adultery, 377
Adult suffrage, 469
Afghanistan, 4-9, 12-4, 17-8, 104, 259, 424, 467
Afghans, *See* Afghanistan
Africa, 30, 49, 91, 192-5, 221, 253, 357, 381, 426
—freedom of 409
—possession of 399, 400
—South, 19, 24, 49, 128, 132, 153, 159, 162, 171, 174, 192-3, 195-6, 202, 231, 269, 280, 289, 373, 392, 396, 399, 404, 407, 411, 418, 423, 424
Agriculture, 17, 163, 311
Ahimsa, *See* Non-violence
Aiyar, Sivaswami, 424
Ajmal Khan, Hakim, 50, 52, 137
Alexander, 273
Alexander, H. G., 365
Ali Brothers, 10, 16, 258
Ali Mahomed, 6, 13, 258, 411
Ali Shaukat, 12, 288, 309
All India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.), 312, 336, 345, 356, 359, 448, 458-61, 470-1, 474-5, 478
All India Spinners' Association (A.I.S.A.) 370
Allies, 230, 233, 237-8, 250, 256, 267, 270, 374, 406, 409, 414-5, 434, 437
Amanulla Khan, 258
America, 101-2, 264, 269, 401, 413, 414
—armaments 66-7, 92-3
—Britain, 417, 438, 472
—capitalism, 269
—China, 61-2, 64
—Church, 63
—conscientious objectors, 422
—Congress, 472
—defence method, 441
—democracy, 197-8
—Denmark, 62
—disarmament, 472
—exploitation of other races, 34
—France, 89
—Gandhiji, *See* Gandhiji
—gangsters, 164-5
—Germany, 161, 172, 201, 207-8
—India, 31-2, 35, 101-4, 414-5
—Japan, 62-3
—Jews, 172
—Kellogg Pact, 89, 92
—last war, 89
—masses, 29
—military training, 38
—missionaries, 64-5
—moral rearmament, 208-11
—Negroes, 115-6, 127-8, 269
—non-violence, 152, 156, 472
—peace, 472
—President's appeal to Hitler, 212
—press, 427
—Whites, 115
Anarchy, 274, 324, 358, 421, 456, 470
Anasakti yoga, 123
Andrews, C. F., 8, 54, 238, 247, 419-20
Aney, Bapuji, 283
Anti-untouchability, 411
Arabia, 443
Arabs, 159-60, 163, 206, 440, 443-4
Arjuna, 117-9, 120-1, 123, 316, 330
Armaments, 66-7, 92-3, 103-4, 149, 159 199, 234, 237, 257, 265, 305, 328, 424, 429-30, 446, 471
Arms Act, 49
Arnold, Edwin, 177, 407
Ashraf, Dr., 467
Asia, 26, 30, 51-2, 91, 162, 178, 184, 221, 231, 381, 407, 423-4
—dismemberment of, 407
—freedom of, 409.
—possession of, 400
Asiatics, *See* Asia
Assam, 395
Atilla, 169
Australia, 146, 202, 422, 464
Austria, 21, 164, 422, 437
Austrians, *See* Austria
Autobiography (by Gandhiji), 68
Axis power, 400, 408
Azad, Abul Kalam, 136, 310, 313, 349, 395, 455, 463

Bajaj, Jamnalal, 98, 326
Baker, Col., 20
Ballou, 426
Bambatta, 195
Banerjee, R. C., 18
Banerjee, Suresh, 98, 469
Banker, S. G., 98
Bantus, 193
Bapu, *See* Gandhiji
Bardoli struggle, 546
Bartlett, P., 365

Baumgarten, 48, 55
Belgium, 48, 55
Benes, Dr., 154
Bengal, 268, 464
—East, 401
Bhagvadgita, See Gita
Bharatanandji, 338
Bible, 118, 123, 160, 163, 176, 179, 192
Bidder, Anna, 365
Boers, 419
Boer War, 1, 22-4, 73, 100, 188-90, 357, 416
Bolshevism, 26-7, 47, 426
Borah, 89, 93
Bose Brothers, 136
Bose, J. C., 419
Bose, Subhas, 468
Boycott, 418, 425
Bravery, 61, 78-9, 94, 131, 137, 151, 154, 265, 270, 273, 281, 298, 305, 334, 335, 349, 357-8, 435, 464
Brayshaw, W. M., 365
Briand, 89
Britain, 19, 49, 202, 319, 373, 381, 400-1, 408-10, 413-4
—and Abyssinia, 220
—and Afghanistan, 259
—and America, 417, 438
—and China, 65
—and compulsory military training, 38-9
—armaments of, 66-7
—armed dictatorship of, 161
—bullet of, 11, 163
—colonies of, 223-4
—Congress, *See* Congress
—conscientious objectors, 359
—conscription, 48
—control, 480
—Czechoslovakia, 149, 151-2
—democracy, 198, 220, 222, 224, 238-9
—Eire, 47
—English, 160
—Fascism, 222, 438
—France, 149, 438
—Gandhiji, 80, 102, 188, 213, 215-7, 240, 247, 256, 268, 293-6, 314-5, 347-8, 417, 422, 428, 455, 464, 471-2, 478
—Germany, 149, 160-1, 172, 176, 200, 207-8, 256, 281, 320, 340, 348, 357
—Hitler, 281, 317, 357
—humanity, service of, 87
—hunting, 47
—Imperialism, 88, 215, 217, 220, 222, 235, 239, 249, 257, 267, 351, 409, 473
—India, 2, 6, 14-5, 19, 31-2, 47, 53, 56, 71, 81-3, 87-8, 100, 102-4, 107, 110, 133, 136, 138, 150, 197, 215, 220, 224, 236, 238, 249, 256-8, 262, 267, 268-9, 279, 281, 295-6, 359, 361, 418, 430-1, 451, 458-60, 465
Britain interests, 400
—Italy, 110-1, 149, 281, 348
—Jews, 163, 172, 200
—Kellogg Pact, 89-91
—League of Nations, 53, 111, 418
—Manchuria, 220
—missionaries, 65
—moral rearmament, 208-9
—Mussolini, 281, 317
—Nazism, 280-1, 307
—new world order, 221-2
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—no-war movement, 117, 143-4
—Opium War, 47
—outside criticism, 167
—Palestine, 163
—Ponsonby action, 431
—possession, 400
—power, 402, 404, 408
—ruling classes, 438
—Russia, 101-3
—small nationalities, 280
—statesman, 400
—supremacy, 402
—Tory Party, 438
—troops, 400
—unemployment, 423
—violence, 478
—war aims, 222, 224, 238-40, 256, 296
—war crisis, 155, 438
—war, present, 160-1, 219, 221-3, 267, 270, 272, 280-2, 284-5, 317, 340, 347, 356-7, 359-60, 464-5, 472-3
—war resisters, 432
—wars, 80-1, 88, 428, 431
—world, 239, 315
—World War, (1914-18), 21, 23, 39, 69, 126
British Empire, 19, 21-2, 24-5, 49, 70-1, 210, 232, 282, 294, 417, 422, 428, 430
British People, See Britons
Britons, 14, 280, 292-6, 303-5, 317, 320, 343-4, 364, 375, 398-400, 408, 463-5
Brotherhood, 37, 42, 64, 311
Brotherhood, 66
Brute force, 65, 114, 119, 137, 169, 212, 214, 244, 261, 272, 281, 319, 372, 380
Buchaman, F., 208
Buddha, 129, 178, 191, 308-9, 371
Burma, 17, 178, 375, 391, 414
—evacuation, 389
Bushido, 425
Buxton, C. R., 210

Calcutta, 391, 404
California, 101-2
Canada, 295, 422, 464
Cannibalism, 122, 310
Cantlie, Dr., 20
Capital Punishment, 25

Capitalism, 30-1, 101, 269, 373, 421, 430, 439
Carbiollet, 51
Carlyle, 339
Catchpool, C., 249
Central Powers, 423
—responsible government, 467
Ceresole, Pierre, 106-7
Ceylon, 178
Chamberlain, 151, 214-5, 250, 438
Champaran, 245
Charkha, *See* Spinning wheel
Charkha Sangh, 288
Chattopadhyaya, Kamaladevi, 232-3
Chelmsford, Lord, 25
Chenghis Khan, 129
Chiang Kai-shek, 404, 424
Chiang Kai-shek, Madam, 407
China, 67, 183, 404-7
—aggression, 408
—America, *See* America
—awakening, 102
—boycott, 418
—Britain, *See* Britain
—Christian powers, 46
—Colony, 404
—defence, 408
—Gandhiji, 147-8, 184, 187-8, 340
—Germany, 46
—Imperialism, 424
—India, 17, 39, 177, 186, 267-8, 404
—Japan, 148, 151, 173-4, 177-8, 181-6, 189-92, 263, 441
—militarism, 424, 426
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—pacifism, 424
—peace, 148
—philosophy, 425
—strikes, 418
—struggle, 404
—war, 222, 424
—world, 424
Chinese, *See* China
Choithram, Dr., 251
Christ, Jesus, 41, 64, 117, 122, 132, 167, 170, 179-81, 191, 195, 357, 371, 420, 422, 424, 441
Christianity, 29, 46, 64-6, 116-7, 144, 159, 165, 194, 420, 423, 425-6,
Christians, 52, 116-7, 159, 161-2, 171, 176, 179, 181, 183, 192-3, 195, 322, 347, 356, 380, 463, 469, 474
Christian teaching, 381
Church, 118
Civil disobedience, *See* Civil resistance
Civil liberties, 465
Civil resistance, 2, 70, 103, 138-9, 161, 231, 250, 270, 291, 300, 344, 348, 350-2, 366, 373, 397, 448, 467-8, 470-1, 475-6
Civil services, 545
Civilization, 46, 54, 102, 169, 418, 434, 437-9, 441
Collective security, 220, 435
Columbus, 479
Communal Decision, 255
Communal harmony, *See* Communal unity
Communal pact, 144, 254
Communal peace, 110, 133, 470
Communal riots, 133-8, 142, 144, 164, 239, 246-7, 251, 262-3, 276-7, 284, 301-2, 312-3, 324, 331, 344-5, 371, 448, 453
Communal unity, 103, 110, 112, 140, 200, 254, 255, 269, 332, 351, 355, 411, 439
Communalism, 58, 251, 261
Communism (Communists), 436, 438, 467
Communist manifesto, 487
Congress, 366-7
—All India Congress Committee (A.I.C.C.) See All India Congress Committee
—Allies, 237-8
—America, *See* America
—Amritsar, 25
—armed defence, 236, 279, 296, 309, 331, 336
—army, 279, 312
—Bardoli decision, 448
—Bombay, 449
—Bombay resolution 345, 347-8, 354-5, 461, 466, 471, 474-6
—Britain, 224, 239, 240, 250, 256, 268-9, 279, 286, 314-5, 361, 414, 458, 462-5, 471-3
—British, *See*—British rule
—British rule, 133, 136, 139, 141, 142, 224, 231, 268, 346-7, 351, 452-4,
—Christians, 356, 474
—civil disobedience (resistance), 344, 449-50, 471
—claim, 473
—constructive programme, 97
—co-operation, 469
—corruption, 449
—creed, 59, 141, 150, 153, 236, 288, 291, 315, 332, 343, 353, 361, 449, 451, 453, 471
—Czechoslovakia, 149-50, 454
—dacoities, 331, 371-3
—defence, 285
—Delhi resolution, 286-8, 312,-3, 351, 354, 458-9, 474
—demand, 250, 256, 286, 359, 445, 466, 469, 476
—direct action, 473
—discipline, 324, 447, 470-1, 478
—Englishmen, *See* British rule
—existence, 471, 474
—faith, 274, 361, 450, 452
—Fascism, 218, 474
—foreign invasion, 236, 274-7, 279, 309, 330-1

Congress-France, 225
—fraud, 239
—freedom, 458, 473
—Gandhiji, *See* Gandhiji
—goal, 450-1
—God, 280
—goondaism, *See* hooliganism
—Government, 141, 210, 213, 235, 242, 287, 331, 344, 348, 361, 445, 447, 451-2, 454, 458-9, 469
—Governments, 199, 210, 218, 251, 333
—grain dealer, 369
—greatest crisis, 460
—growth, 133, 136, 448
—Haripura, 133, 136
—Hindus, 356, 474
—history, 460, 474
—hooliganism,58-60, 230, 324
—hostility to, 322
—humanity, 279
—independence, 316, 325, 349, 446, 450, 465-6, 473
—India, 86, 133, 234, 237, 279, 312, 355, 451, 454, 462
—indiscipline, 239, 353, 468
—internal anarchy (disorders, disturbances), 274-6, 279, 309, 331-2, 337
—Jews, 474
—Khan, Abdul Gaffar, 297-8
—leaders, 310, 395
—League of Nations, 52
—legislators, 141
—masses, 268, 474-5
—material help, 315
—military budget, 237
—military unit, 366
—ministers (ministries), 135, 139, 141, 164, 244, 262, 325, 451-2, 454-5
—moral authority, *See*—moral force
—moral co-operation, 454
—moral force, 52, 141
—moral hold, (influence), 268
—moral reservoir, 315
—moral support, 240, 250, 256, 267, 286, 314-6
—Muslim League, 332, 355
—Muslims, 239, 355, 474
—national spirit, 463-4
—Nazism, 218, 361
—Nehru, Jawaharlal, 348, 461
—non-communal, 350
—non-Congressmen, 356, 451, 463-4, 470
—non-co-operation, 231, 256, 268, 466
—non-embarrassment, 473, 476
—non-violence, 58-61, 83, 85, 133-4, 138-40, 144, 156, 158, 165, 193, 199, 210, 224, 227-8, 230-1, 234-8, 240-1, 243-5, 252-3, 261-2, 267-8, 274-8, 284-91, 308-15, 322-6, 330-2, 334, 336, 343-4, 353, 446, 449-55, 459, 465, 469, 471-5
Congress non-violent army, 134, 137-8, 140, 142, 285, 453
—non-violent resistance, 459
—office acceptance (holding), 141, 450
—organization, 447, 449, 470, 473-4
—Parsis, 356, 474
—parties, 353
—Patna decision, 448
—peace, 85, 144, 150, 238, 250, 454, 460, 472
—peaceful rebel, 453, 475
—pledge, 353, 458
—policy, 83, 133, 141-2, 158, 210, 235, 238, 252, 267, 275, 286, 309, 331, 334, 353, 447-8, 453, 457-9, 469, 473
—Poona resolution, 314-5, 330, 336, 343, 355, 458-9, 474
—power, 141
—prestige, 141, 275, 315, 331, 334, 336
—Princes, 322
—principle, 465
—programme, 457
—provinces, 254
—Ramgarh, 455
—Ramgarh resolution, 286, 352, 445, 463
—reason, free play of, 449
—resolution of 1920, 468
—riots, 133-4, 136, 139-40, 142, 144, 164, 230, 239-40, 246, 323-5, 331, 344
—satyagraha, 352, 459
—self-defence, 260-1, 336-7, 447
—service of the nation (people), 193, 474
—Sikhs, 356
—Sindh, 336-7
—soldiers, advice to, 16-7
—strength, 275, 474
—Swaraj, 465
—traditions, 352
—truth, 85, 315, 449, 451
—Viceroy, 473
—violence, *See* Violence
—volunteers, 394
—war, 316, 348, 351, 373-4, 460, 471
—war, present, 149-50, 210-1, 214, 217-24, 286-7, 346, 347-8, 350-1, 359-61, 446-7, 455-9, 464-6, 469
—Wardha resolution, 286, 313, 323, 341, 354, 458, 461-2, 478, 480
—West, the, 334
—women, 245
—Working Committee, *See* Working Committee,
—world, *See* World
Conscientious objection (objectors), 14, 33-4, 38-9, 117-8, 202, 351, 359-61, 418, 428, 478
Conscription, 47, 93, 202, 204, 257
Constituent Assembly, 220, 465

Constructive programme (work), 97, 100, 134, 244, 291, 331, 341-2, 366, 384, 451, 476
Contre la Guerre Nouvelle (De Ligt.) 418
Co-operation, 483-4
Cosmopolitan, The, 116
Cottage industries, *See* Village industries
Cowardice, 1, 50, 60, 63, 76-7, 94, 105, 109-10, 137, 141, 152, 154, 158, 243, 326, 334-5, 362, 364, 375, 483
Cow-protection, 13
Crewe, Lord, 20
Criminal assaults, 376-9
—authorities, 379
—man, 378
—parents and husbands, 378
—public opinion, 377
—press, 377
—women, 376-9
Cripps mission, 405
Czechoslovakia, 149-52, 157-8, 162, 164, 168-9, 175, 220, 229, 248, 250, 273, 433, 438, 444, 454
Czechs, *See* Czechoslovakia

Dacoits, 371-3, 384, 387
Daily Worker, The, 465
Daladier, 151
Danes, *See* Denmark
Daniel, 132,
Danzig, 216, 232,
Dasgupta, S. C., 98
Datta, Dr., 424
Davis, R., 365
Defence, 1, 10, 11, 14, 92-4, 143, 230 235-6, 238, 246-7, 258, 260-1, 285, 296, 297, 306, 323, 416-27, 429-30, 441, 446-7
De Jong., A., 417
De Ligt, B., 73, 86, 416
Democracy, 23, 30, 37, 96, 151, 159, 161, 168, 197-9, 202-4, 208, 219-23, 230, 233, 238-9, 268-70, 280, 292, 342, 357, 363, 387, 435-6, 464-5, 473
Democratic Powers, *See* Democracy
Denmark, 46-9, 54-5, 62, 267
Desai, Mahadev, 98, 169, 207, 337
Deshpande, Gangadharrao, 98
De Valera, 21
Dhanush Takli, 370
Dharasana, 484
Dictators, *See* Dictatorship
Dictatorship, 152, 161, 172, 175, 199, 430, 433, 436
Die Emporung Asiens (C. Rosz), 426
Direct action, 131, 473
Disarmament, 28, 44, 81, 85, 89, 90, 108, 111, 116, 158, 176, 334, 459, 472
Doctrine of the sword, *See* Non-violence, and Violence
Dominion Status, 91, 100, 238, 428, 430-1, 464
Doukhobors, 253
Druses, 50-1
Durban, 413
Duryodhana, 316
Dutch, 319
Dyer, 1-2, 39-40, 43, 96, 244
Dyerism, 52, 61

East, The, 33, 102, 104, 232, 424
East India Cotton Association, 460
Eaton, H., 101
Edison, 66
Education, 90-2, 96, 107, 184, 195-6, 226, 270, 319-20, 439
Egypt, 202, 443
Einstein, 106
Elliot Smith, G., 435
England, *See* Britain
English-educated middle classes, 483
Englishmen, 21-2, 383
—administrators, 22-3, 112, 162
—arms, 259
—blackest crime, 28, 49
—bravery, 259, 281, 459, 464
—colour prejudice, 263
—Congress, *See* Congress
—conscientious objectors, 478
—endurance, 459
—faith in, 21
—fear of, 1, 10
—fearlessness, 464
—freedom of speech, 463
—Gandhiji, *See* Gandhiji
—Imperialism, 112
—India, 1-7, 13-6, 112, 135-6, 138, 236, 259, 348, 466-7
—Indians, 19, 231, 270
—insularity, 263
—Nazism, 361
—Nehru, Jawaharlal, 223
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—pacifists, 143-4
—soldiers, 112
—South Africa, 24
—traders, 112
—tutors of the world, 42, 45
—war, 296
—war, last (1914-18), 21-2, 25, 39
—war, present, 36, 41
—Zulus, 1, 21
Euclid, 45, 131, 292, 339
Europe, 221, 321, 424, 438, 443
—aggression, 68
—arms, 49
—Asia, 178
—best mind, 49
—breakdown, 55
—civilization, 46, 54
—defence method, 441
—democracy, 221, 292
—disarmament, 44, 158
—disease, 30
—excesses, 49
—Gandhiji, *See* Gandhiji

Europe—exploitation, 323
—federation, 197
—great powers, *See* Great powers
—*homo sapiens*, 46
—India, 3, 29-30, 35, 49, 149, 241, 323
—inhumanity, 473
—Kaiser, the, 54
—Kellogg Pact, 89-92
—masses, 29-31
—moral stature, 275
—morals, 48
—Napoleon, 82
—nations, 46-7, 54-5, 473
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—peace, 81, 83, 147, 149, 152, 434
—people, 30
—political power, 29
—politics, 149, 165, 168
—present condition, 57
—press, 416, 427
—small nationalities, 149, 152, 157, 281, 456
—standard, 48
—States, 56
—Swaraj, 30
—terrorism, 68
—violence, *See* Violence
—war, 155, 197, 218, 220, 433-5
—war, present, 217-8, 220, 221-3, 273-4, 281-2, 348, 356, 445, 455
—war resistance, 49, 78, 82, 86-8
—youth, 40-1, 55
Europeans, *See* Europe
Evacuation, 385-6
—for military, 403
Evacuees, 384-5
Evolution, 66
Experiments with Truth (By Gandhiji)188
Exodus 383-5

Fascism (Fascists), 177, 198, 202-3, 204, 218, 221-2, 269, 414, 426, 435, 436, 438, 474-5
Fasting, 411-2
Fear, 388
Fearlessness, 346. 464
Federation, 198, 219
Fellowship of Reconciliation, 183, 190
Fisher, Bishop, 413
Food-stuff, saving, 368
Force, *See* Brute force
Forcible resistance, 265
Ford, Henry, 101
Foreign Affairs, 424
Forgiveness, 1-2
Forward, 429
Forward Block, 467
France, 481
—America, 89
—Britain, 149, 438
—colonies, 232
—Congress, 224
—Conscription, 93
France—Czechoslovakia, 149, 151-2
—democracy, 199
—Druses, 51
—fall, 272-3
—French, 51, 82, 160
—French Congo, 51
—Gandhiji, *See* Gandhiji
—Germany, 53, 149, 162, 198, 201
—hunting, 47
—imperialist, 215
—India, 15, 56
—Jews, 160
—League of Nations, 52, 53
—motto, 53
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—Riffs, 53
—Syria, 50, 51, 53
—war, last, 66
—war, present, 214, 215-6, 219 267, 270, 272, 273, 445
Franco, 151
Francois d'Assissi, 424
Franklin, 444
Freedom, 225, 272, 306, 347, 350-1, 353, 356, 360, 428, 433, 437, 445-6, 458-9, 463, 467, 476, 483
Freedom of action, 471, 473
Freedom of pen, 353
Freedom of speech, 350-1, 353, 359, 360, 446, 466-7, 471, 473
French Congo, 51
Frontier, (N.W.F.) 10-1, 39, 197, 297, 335, 454, 464-5
Fry, A. Ruth, 365

Gads Danskee Magasin, 46
Gandhi-Irwin Pact, 402
Gandhi Seva Sangh, 135, 242-3, 244, 288, 452
Gandhiji, 26, 29, 46, 113-7, 127-9, 135 143, 146-8, 169-72, 174, 177-8, 181-4, 186-8, 190-5, 209-10, 212-3, 217, 223-4, 228-9, 238, 241-2, 244, 245, 256, 288, 291, 312, 314, 322-3, 325, 327, 329-30, 337-8, 345-6, 373, 476, 480-1, 483, 487
—absolution, 275, 287, 341, 355, 445-7 456-7
—Abyssinia, 229, 250
—advice, 456
—Afghanistan, 6-9, 12-4, 258-9
—age, 353
—ahimsa, *See*—non-violence
—Ali Brothers, 255, 259
—Allies, the, 230, 233, 238, 250, 256
—ambition, 349
—America, 26, 31-8, 40, 116, 294, 471-2
—Andrews, C. F., 419-20
—Aney, Bapuji, 288
—armament, 327
—assault on, 1
—*Autobiography*, 184
—Banerjee, Suresh, 469

Gandhiji—beliefs, 439
—blessings, 468
—body, 352
—Boer War, 1, 22, 24, 73, 100, 188, 416
—Bombay resolution, 346, 347, 461, 474, 478
—Britain, 81, 88, 101, 188, 213, 215-7, 240, 247, 256, 268, 293, 295-6, 314-5, 320, 347-8, 417, 423, 428-9, 456, 463, 471-4.
—British people, *See*-Britons
—Britons, 280-2, 293-5, 303, 304-5, 317, 320-1, 347-8, 364-5
—capacity for research, 290
—captain, 478-9
—Central Powers, 419
—chief work, 246
—China, *See* China
—Christ, Jesus, 181
—citizen of the Empire, 22, 49, 71, 282
—civil death, 88
—civil disobedience (resistance), 231, 300, 350, 352, 448, 470, 475-6
—colleagues (comrades, co-workers), 231, 236, 286, 291, 300, 312, 452, 469
—Columbus, 478-9
—communal unity, 255, 439
—confession, 355
—Congress, 139-41, 210-1, 213, 227, 228, 230-1, 235, 250, 268, 275-8, 283-4, 286-7, 290-1, 296, 300, 312-4, 324, 345-56, 359-60, 368-73, 445, 466, 474-6
—conscience, 361, 456
—constructive programme, 331
—Czechoslovakia, 151-2, 157-8, 229, 250, 433
—Dandi March, 231, 452
—day-dreams, 349, 456
—Delhi resolution, 459, 474
—democracy, 269-70
—detachment, 449
—dream of life, 263
—East, the, 33
—eldest son, 1
—ending a calf's life, 131
—England, *See* Britain
—error, 355
—Europe, 26, 31, 40-1, 46, 100, 147, 165, 168, 420, 434, 456
—failures, 291
—faith, 3, 14, 112, 115, 127, 130-2, 139, 158, 170, 176, 181, 212, 214, 231, 235, 237, 241, 248, 251, 262, 265-6, 275-6, 283, 286, 300, 306, 321, 364, 437, 461
—fascism, 414
—fasts, 126, 170
—fear, 461
—France, 214-6
Gandhiji—freedom, 341, 450, 456
—general (generalship), 168, 239, 326, 351, 462
—Generalissimo, 455
—Germany, 26, 40, 165-6, 216
—Gita, 120, 123-4, 348
—God and, 36, 53, 77, 127, 131, 187, 212-4, 229-30, 251, 263, 270, 275, 282, 290-1, 294, 321, 326, 346, 357, 449, 457, 462
—gospel, 37
—Government, 24-5, 73, 79, 230, 287, 300, 350, 352, 359, 364, 475
—great powers, 157-9
—greatest responsibility, 461
—growth, 352, 461
—guidance, 452, 456
—*guru*, 467
—heart, 462
—helplessness, 77, 246, 268
—Himalayan blunder, 291
—Hinduism, 124
—Hindus, 463
—Hitler, 214, 296
—hope, 199, 307, 455
—humanity, service of, 348, 420, 431
—importance, 476
—impatience, 452-3, 456
—imperfections, 282, 289-90, 292
—imperialism, 422
—imprisonment, 352
—in jail, 182, 187, 351
—incapacity, 24, 28
—inconsistency, 228, 472
—India, (love, pride for), 3, 88, 171, 241
—India, work in, 2, 26, 29-30, 32-7, 41, 87, 100, 102-3, 127, 147, 153, 158, 168, 200, 271, 279, 305, 320, 346, 348, 418-9, 425-6, 431, 439, 458-9, 468-9
—Indian experiment, *See* India, work in
—individuality, 349
—industrialism, 425
—inner nature, 444
—'inscrutability', 229
—instinct, 306
—intellect, 462
—iron will, 461
—Italy, 348
—Jews, 159-60, 165, 167-9, 172-3, 179, 205-6, 320, 440-5
—khadi, 97-9, 439
—Kheda, 268
—Khilafat, 206, 445
—labour strike, 469
—Lajpatrai, Lala, 13
—leadership, 37, 291, 319, 353, 451, 457-8
—liberty, 349

Gandhiji-limitations, 27, 37, 40, 12[illegible]
156, 213, 229, 321, 351
—limited powers, 246
—littleness 40
—loftiness, 445
—magnetism, 268
—man of religion, 170-1, 420
—means, 462
—message, 26, 40, 116, 153, 178, 184, 195, 348, 364, 470
—method, 296, 319, 441
—military training, 424-6
—mind, workings of, 351-2
—ministers, 451, 453
—mission, 35, 147, 211, 276, 282, 296, 352, 423, 426, 469
—moral co-operation, 455
—moral support, 314-6
—mother, 171
—Munshi, K. M., 324
—Muslims, 445, 470-1
—Nazism, 414
—Negroes, 116, 194-5
—Nehru, Jawaharlal, 277, 461
—non-co-operation, 107
—non-embarrassment policy of, 347, 359-62, 462, 466, 471, 476
—non-violence, 2, 9, 21-2, 24, 27-8, 41-2, 49-50, 71, 74-7, 81, 87, 99-100, 109, 111, 115, 119, 124-5, 126-8, 129-32, 135-6, 139-40, 143-4, 156-8, 169, 172, 174-5, 178-81, 184, 186, 189, 199-201, 205, 210-1, 216-7, 228-31, 234, 237-9, 241, 245, 247-51, 259, 262-6, 269, 274-5, 282, 289-92, 296, 299-301, 310, 312-3, 320-8, 329-30, 333, 341-3, 347, 353-4, 362-4, 419, 421-7, 445-57 468, 478
—non-violent army, 325-6
—non-violent rebel, 71
—not a coward, 105, 152, 158, 166
—not a recluse, 327
—not a visionary, 2, 351
—not a well-read man, 127
—not helpless, 1
—Pant, G. B., 324
—Parsis, 470
—Patel, Sardar Vallabhbhai, 284, 323
—patience, 433
—peace, 81-2, 147, 250, 349, 428
—personality, 449
—Poland, 217, 250
—politically without a peer, 461
—politics, 170-1
—Poona resolution, 474
—power of growth, 290
—practical idealist, 2
—practical man, 3
—prayer, 156, 170, 212, 217, 251, 256, 457, 461
Gandhiji-principle, 456, 461
—programme, 439
—Rajagopalachari, C., 284, 286-7, 323, 354
—religion of, 3, 241
—resourcefulness, 352
—result, attitude to, 462
—Rowlatt Act, 25
—Russia, 26, 78
—salvation, 463
—satyagraha, 153, 216 347, 349, 354, 441
—search, 456
—secret methods, 259
—self-expression, 457
—self-suppression, 463
—Sermon on the Mount, 420
—Sevagram, work at, 131, 270, 327, 352
—shoe-making, 290
—silence, 170, 213, 289, 457
—social reformer, 170
—soul, 452, 455, 461
—South Africa, 24, 49, 128, 132, 153, 159, 171, 174, 195-6, 231, 280, 289, 418
—Spain, 250
—spiritual gospel, 198
—spiritual greatness, 461
—spiritual prophet and leader, 248
—stewardship, 353
—still small voice, 52, 57, 231
—strength, 352, 461
—striving for perfection, 116
—study of geometry, 113
—successes, 291
—Swaraj, 466
—talents, 291
—teacher, true, 290
—Tolstoy, 420
—travail, 462
—trial, 3, 241
—truth, 27, 132, 135, 206, 228, 282, 324, 347, 404, 449
—truth and non-violence, 40-1, 68, 450
—unconditional support, 223, 240-1, 324-5, 455, 462
—universal love, 282
—unseen power, 187
—untouchability, 126, 171
—Viceroy, 213, 215, 217, 231, 240, 282, 345-6, 350, 351, 359-61, 364, 424, 465, 467, 469-70, 475
—violence, 1, 7, 250, 423, 429
—virtue, 463
—war, last (1914-18), 1, 19-26, 49, 68-9, 73-5, 106, 125, 188, 229, 267-8, 416, 418
—war, opposition to, 68-72, 74-5, 78-82, 86-8, 161, 181, 212, 213, 218, 228-9, 240, 349, 357, 360-1 416-33, 435, 454, 478-9

Gandhiji-war, present, 210-1, 228-9, 267, 314, 345-9, 454-5, 462, 465
—war resister, *See*—war, opposition to
—Wardha resolution, 341
—weakness, 100, 229, 355, 433
—West, 33, 36-7, 147, 212, 413-4, 419-20, 423, 425
—wife, 174
—wisdom, 352
—women, 245, 290
—word, 321, 323
—Working Committee, *See*—Congress,
—world, 31-3, 35, 37, 212, 248, 305-6, 320, 327, 346, 348-9, 364, 420, 426, 439, 446
—zeal, 300
—Zulu Rebellion, (Revolt), 1, 21-2, 25, 73, 100, 188, 195, 416
Garrison, 426
Germans, *See* Germany
Germany, 40, 44, 373
—aerial bombing, 435
—Allied blockade, 437
—America, *See* America
—armament, 44, 67
—Belgium, 48, 55
—Bolshevism, 48
—Britain, *See* Britain
—China, *See* China
—colonies, 232
—Communism, 438
—conscientious objectors, 422
—Czechoslovakia, 149-50, 157, 175
—Danzig, 216
—Denmark, 47, 55
—dictatorship, 152
—Empire, 273
—France, *See* France
—Gandhiji *See* Gandhiji
—great people, 55
—Hitler, 214, 273, 307, 320, 441
—India, 54-5, 166, 223, 263, 266, 295, 458
—Italy, 149
—Jews, 159-63, 165-9, 172, 179, 200-1, 205-8, 320, 440-5
—militarism, 55, 179
—minority, 444
—Nazism, 218, 249, 319-21
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—Norway, 266-7
—Pan-Germanism, 47-8, 55
—peace, 55
—Poland, 47, 55, 219, 227, 323, 338
—Polish Corridor, 216
—Ponsonby action, 431-2
—Quakers, 247, 437
—revolution, 438
—Sudetens, 438
—Versailles, treaty of, 203
—violence, *See* Violence
—war, 320-1, 437
Germany-war, last (1914-18), 21, 25, 49-55, 434, 437
—war, present, 213-6, 233, 270, 307, 320-1, 340, 356-7
—world, *See* World
—youth movement, 55, 320-1
Gewalt und Gewaltlosigkeit, 426
Gidwani, Shamlal, 362-3
Gita, The, 4, 71-2, 117-8, 120, 123-4, 298, 308, 326, 330
God,
—belief in, 123, 194
—brute force, 214
—Commander, 327
—common to all, 161, 163
—Congress, 279
—creation, 117, 137
—Creator of State, 48
—dedication to, 155
—denial of, 27
—direction, 209
—divinity shared by man, 305
—faith in, 29, 77, 117, 119, 145, 147, 161, 168, 191
—fear of, 162, 335
—forsaken by, 164
—fulfilling Himself, 454
—Gandhiji and, *See* Gandhiji
—grace of, 145
—gratitude to, 155
—help, 77, 246, 271, 294, 353, 469
—heritage given by, 165
—human life, 43
—imperial court, 357
—infallible Guide, 327
—Innermost, 462
—instruments of, 191, 326
—intervention of, 455
—Law of, 197, 251
—leadership, 209
—life designed by, 42
—light given by, 4
—living, 117, 124, 194
—loyalty to, 16
—mercy of, 77
—name of, 347, 463
—near to, 463
—not impotent, 214
—of Love, 117, 119, 168
—of mercy and justice, 11
—omnipresence, 145
—one without a second, 161
—peace, 251
—personal, 161
—plans of, 191
—power of, 145, 159
—prayer to, 82, 212, 327
—presence of, 24, 154
—protection from, 64, 187
—purpose of, 295
—Rama, 477
—realization, 137
—refuge in, 335

God-reign in heaven, 121
—reign on earth, 121
—result, 298
—search of, 449
—servant of, 153, 297
—shield, 335
—soul of men, 42
—State-made frontiers, 108
—strength, 321
—thanks to, 227, 246
—trust in, 11
—Truth, 127, 168, 282, 414
—unfailing assistance of, 175
—unseen Power, 52, 187
—untouched by everything, 326
—upholder of justice, 218
—waiting upon, 75
—way of, 4
—will of, 241
—with us, 335
—without the eternal cycle, 311
—world need, 35
Gokhale, G. K., 19
Government, (British), 5-9, 11, 13-5, 17-9 22-3, 38-9, 41, 49, 69, 74, 79, 94, 96, 107, 133, 162, 171, 210, 213, 218, 221-2, 230, 235, 242, 244-5, 246, 250, 251, 259, 264, 271, 278, 282, 284, 288, 294-5, 315, 321, 325, 334, 344, 346, 348, 350, 352, 359-61, 364-5, 376, 384, 389, 391-2, 405, 417-8, 432-3, 445, 448-9, 450-1, 458-9, 460, 465, 469, 473, 483
Government, Political form of, 36, 41-2, 421
Government of India Act, 198, 199, 218, 464
Grain-dealers, 369
Great Britain, *See* Britain
Great powers, 116, 149, 157-9, 168, 176, 179, 274
Greenburg, H., 440
Gregg, Richard, 118, 291, 433
Gujarat, 285, 288, 302, 314
Gupta, Pashupatinath, 134, 138, 453
Gurkhas, 4-6, 237, 325
Guru-ka-Bagh morcha 34

Hamdard, 51
Hand-carding, 17
Handicrafts, 296, 439
Hand-loom (weaving), 17
Hardinge, Lord, 25
Harijan, 125, 127, 134, 155, 197, 200, 205, 207, 242, 248, 274, 284, 306, 314, 320, 328, 340, 362, 392, 433, 435, 480
Harijanbandhu, 314
Harijans, 126, 439
Harrison, Agatha, 248
Hartog, Philip, 207
Haworth, C. and H., 247
Heath, C., 365
Hijrat, 247, 253-4, 362-3
Himsa. *See* Violence
Hind Swaraj (Gandhiji), 243
Hinduism, 3, 23, 123-4, 165, 252
Hindu Mahasabha, 259, 261
Hindu-Muslim unity (clashes, riots, tension), 6, 12, 53, 56, 75-6, 110, 140, 206, 239, 243, 261, 439, 470
Hindus, 6, 11, 13-4, 17-8, 23, 25-6, 50, 53, 75-7, 110, 123-4, 137, 145, 159, 161, 198, 225, 239, 246, 251-2, 254-5, 258-61, 322, 341, 356, 362-3, 463, 469-70, 474
Hitler, 173, 214-6, 230, 232-3, 243, 244, 267, 272-3, 281, 290, 296, 305, 306-7, 317, 319-21, 351, 373, 438, 441, 456
Hitler Speaks (H. Rauschnigg), 320
Hitlerism, 272-3
Hobhouse, Emily, 189
Hodge, J. Z., 169
Holmes, Dr. 413
Home Rule, *See* Swaraj
Howard, E. F., 365
Hsu, P. C., 183, 190
Hudson, J. H., 365
Humanity, *See* Mankind

Imperialism, 21, 88, 103, 112, 116, 119, 158, 215, 217-23, 234, 239, 247, 249, 257-8, 267, 269, 282, 351-2, 361, 381, 407-8, 418, 421-2, 424, 428, 432, 440, 446, 473-4, 478
Imperialistic nations, 481
Independence, 91, 101, 134, 142, 152, 154, 199, 202, 217, 234, 239, 249-50, 263-5, 275, 279, 287, 295-6, 316, 324-5, 347, 349, 430, 450, 452-3, 458, 463, 465, 466-7, 470, 473-4, 476
Independent, 95
India, 124, 183, 267, 355, 381, 388, 400-1, 408, 480
—administration, 483
—Afghanistan, 4-9, 12-4, 17-8, 104, 258-9
—aggression, external, *See* invasion, foreign
—air force, 87, 425
—America, *See* America
—anarchy, 359
—Arabia, 17
—Arabs, 17, 206
—armaments, 237, 257, 424
—arms, 1, 430
—army, 38, 87, 102, 226, 236, 238, 263, 323, 325, 425, 429, 446
—aspiration, 330, 463
—autocracy, 359
—bondage, 35, 349, 351, 458, 463
—bravery, 334
—Britain, *See* Britain
—British rule, *See*—Britain
—Buddhist, 178
—Burma, 17

India-China, *See* China
—civil resistance, 103
—classes, dominant, 429-30
—clothing, 97
—Columbus, 478-9
—Commander-in-Chief, 226-8
—communal unity, 6
—Congress, *See* Congress
—conquerors, 263
—Conscientious objectors, 259-61
—conscription, 257
—Constituent Assembly, 220, 465
—constitution, 197, 199, 200, 295, 333, 465
—co-operation, 483-4
—cowardice, 1, 104-5, 334
—culture, 195, 263
—Czechoslovakia, 149-50
—'decaying nation', 112
—defence, 8-9, 14, 91, 93-4, 101-4, 150, 235-6, 258, 264, 296, 306, 334, 404, 406, 423-4, 429, 445-6, 481
—Defence Forces, 226-8, 279-80
—defencelessness, 480
—deliverance, 206, 211, 214, 349, 351, 463
—democracy, 219-20, 230, 238, 270, 464, 465
—Denmark, 267
—destiny 111
—disarmed, 28, 81, 150
—dishonour, *See* — honour
—dissensions, 261, 267
—division, 470
—doctrine of the sword, 1-3, 241
—domination, 94, 103, 459
—Dominion, 430
—Dominion Status, 91, 100, 238, 464
—East, 104
—economy, 236
—emasculation, 28, 104
—England, *See*—Britain
—Englishmen, 1, 3, 5, 13-4, 111-2, 231, 236, 263, 282, 350, 466-7
—enslavement, *See* slavery
—Europe, 3, 29-30, 35, 48-9, 149, 241, 349
—exploitation, 114, 323, 458-9
—exploited nation, 86, 91, 209, 224, 257
—fear, 227
—foreign policy, 15-6
—foreign rule, 103
—France, 15, 56, 67
—free, 22, 36, 100, 220, 222, 236, 250, 257-8, 264, 288, 310, 342, 428, 445, 458-9, 465
—freedom, 9, 36, 41, 44, 57, 71, 82, 85, 87, 91, 94, 103-4, 134, 141, 150, 158, 212, 216-7, 219-20, 224-5, 248, 262, 267, 274, 308, 348-9, 351, 366, 405, 445, 449, 454, 458-9, 463, 474
India-future, 471
—Gandhiji's love (pride) for, 3, 88, 171, 241
—Gandhiji's work, *See* Gandhiji
—Germany, *See* Germany
—goal, 428
—Government, 6-11, 13-8, 36, 38-41, 49, 50, 94, 96, 107, 132-3, 218, 221-2, 264, 287, 334, 465
—greatest moral force, 112
—greatness, 53
—Gurudwara, 349, 463
—helplessness, 33, 90
—heroism, 442
—history, 410, 463
—Hitler, 373
—Home Rule, 424
—honour, 1, 14, 227
—hope, 439
—imperialism, 218, 220, 222, 361, 374
—impotence, 36, 52
—independence, 91, 101, 133-4, 142, 217, 235, 239, 248, 249-50, 262-5, 275, 279, 287, 295-6, 324, 347, 349, 458, 460, 463, 465, 467, 470
—independent, 286, 295, 445, 451, 467
—inter-migration, 254-5
—internal disorder (disturbances), 285, 331, 446-7, 452
—internal dissensions, 230
—internal economy, 104
—Italy, 110
—invasion, foreign, 4-9, 12-4, 17, 22, 103, 122, 202, 220, 235-6, 259, 264-5, 285, 306, 322, 325, 429, 446-7, 452, 467
—Japan, 5, 177-8, 185-6, 202, 223, 467
—Jews, 443
—khadi, 439
—Lancashire, 34
—leaders, 351
—League of Nations, 428, 430
—liberation, 32, 423
—liberty, *See*—freedom
—manly, 14
—martial races, 236, 285
—mass action, 471-2
—masses, 97, 158, 429, 442, 474-5
—masses of the West, 29, 31
—Mesopotamia, 15
—militarization, 421, 424, 427-8
—military defence, 296, 312
—military expenditure, 6, 93
—military programme, 95-100
—military training, 257, 423, 426
—mission, 3, 111, 241
—Moghuls, 470
—moral rearmament, 209-10
—moral support, 257, 267
—movement, 319, 439
—Mussalmans, 25, 263

India-National Socialism, 319
—national State, 428
—nature, 263
—navy, 87, 425
—Nazism, 374, 471
—neighbouring tribes, 6, 10-1
—non-cooperation, 281, 358, 465
—non-violence, 1-3, 9, 22, 28, 57-8, 83, 86-7, 94-5, 100, 103-6, 109-13, 123, 133, 138-9, 146-7, 149-50, 157-8, 167-8, 170, 210-1, 217, 223, 227-9, 234-8, 241, 243, 250, 256-7, 264-8, 271, 273-4, 276-9, 284, 295, 306, 308, 310, 322-3, 325, 334, 341, 343, 358-9, 458, 465, 471, 486
—Norway, 267
—not a military country, 226-8, 238
—not helpless, 1
—one nation, 385
—oppressed Asiatics, 52
—partial unemployment, 99
—pauper, 267
—peace, 57, 85, 91, 95, 219, 228, 250, 323, 349, 361, 383, 416, 460
—peaceful, 258
—Poland, 225-6
—police force, 225-6
—poverty, 7, 90, 99, 331, 470
—power, 2, 30
—prestige, 358
—Princes, 287
—prison, vast, 349, 463
—Provincial Autonomy, 464
—rebellion, 352
—religions, 135
—republic, 468
—rulers, 177
—Russia, 6, 101-2
—satyagraha, 41-2, 103, 162, 264, 442, 447
—scorched earth, 388-90
—Secretary of State for, 350, 361, 475
—self-defence, 259
—self-determination, 220
—self-government, 102
—self-reliant, 103
—service, 346
—slavery, 358, 454
—soldiers, 4, 6, 8, 16, 96, 228, 258
—soul, 30
—soul force, 36, 238
—South Africa, 24, 162, 193-6, 231, 272, 280
—Spain, 267
—spinning wheel, 103, 291, 449
—spirituality, 3, 5
—spoliation, 82, 97
—States, 221
—strength, 1-3
—strong, 264
—struggle, 169
—students abroad, 319
India-subject nation, 256
—Subjection, 81, 90, 107
—Swadeshi, 5
—Swaraj, *See* Swaraj
—Syria, 50-3
—Tibet, 39
—truth, 206
—Turkey, 15, 17
—unarmed, 236, 258, 334-5
—united, 4, 223
—unity, 102-4, 112
—Viceroy, *See* Viceroy
—village industries, 35
—violence, *See* Violence
—vivisection, 470
—war, 86-93, 148-9, 218-9, 228-9, 264, 295, 352, 400, 417-8, 426, 428, 431, 435, 464
—war, last (1914-18) 21-6, 47, 268
—war tax, 400
—West, 32-3, 37, 91, 94, 102-3, 209, 429
—women, 156-7
—World, 2-3, 32-3, 35-7, 88, 220-1, 228, 232-7, 241, 249, 258, 267, 277, 323, 348, 460, 464
—Indian soldiers, not a national army, 388
Industrialism, 425, 480
Inquiry, The, 61
International Anti-militarist Bureau, 417
International Red Cross Society, 107
International Women's League for Peace and Liberty, 423
Internationalism, 224, 444
Invaders, 484
Iraq, 225, 443
Irish, 444
Islam, 7, 11-2, 25, 165, 202, 252, 298, 445, 470
Israelites, 253
Italians, *See* Italy
Italy, 46, 111-2, 116, 129, 149, 151, 192, 198, 232, 281, 348, 357, 444

Jacob, 115
Jains, 343
Jaiprakash Narain, 351
Jairamdas Doulatram, 98
Jallianwala Bagh, 268
Jamaluddin-al-husaini, Syed, 50
Japan, 67, 183, 383, 398-400, 404-10
—aggression, 407, 415
—America, *See* America
—Axis powers, 408
—China, 408-9
—ism, 399
—monks, 407
—non-violence, 146
—progress, 56, 102
—Russia, 56
—soul of, 425

Japan,-West, 178
—world, 408
Java, 319
Jean D'arc, 21
Jeans, Sir James, 412
Jehovah, 161-2
Jewish Frontier, 205-6, 440
Jewish Tribune, 207
Jews, 48, 159-62, 165-8, 172, 174, 179-81, 200-1, 205-8, 320, 440-5, 469, 475
Jinnah, Quaid-e-Azam, 355, 370
Jivadaya, 343
Johannesburg, 404
Jones, Stanley, 147
Joseph, George, 95-9
Journal de Geneva, 420
Judas, 422
Jugoslavia, 83

Kagawa, 181-2
Kaiser, 54
Karnatak P. C. C. 394
Katju, Dr., 480
Kauravas, 118
Keir Hardie, 426
Kellogg, 89-92
Kellogg Pact, 89-93
Kerala, 398
Khadi (Khaddar), 53, 95-9, 110, 116-7, 433, 439, 449
Khaksars, 468
Khan, Abdul Gaffar, 153, 286, 297-8, 335
Kheda, 268
Kher, Balasaheb, 322, 324-5, 330
Khilafat, 6, 12-4, 17-8, 25, 76, 137, 206, 239, 255, 445
Khudai Khidmatgars, 154, 297-8
Kingdom of Heaven, 115
Korea, 184
Kou Hou Ming, 427
Krestinsky, 26
Kripalani, J. B., 98
Krishna, 117, 123, 314-6, 330, 362-3
Kruger, 162
Kung, Dr., 148

Labour, 270, 451
Lajpat Rai, Lala, 13
Lakshmidas, 98
Lancashire, 34, 247
Lancet, The, 67
Lansbury, 143
League of Nations, 41, 51-3, 199, 219, 418, 429-30, 443-4
Lebanon, 443-4
Levinson, S. O., 89
Lew, T. T., 183
Liberals, 138-9
Liberty, 357, 361, 364, 423-4, 432, 442, 459, 465-7, 476
Liberty of press, 477
Liberty of speech, 463, 466-7, 476-9
Linlithgow, Lord, 293, 360
Lohia, Ram Manohar, 351
London, 407
Lothian, Lord, 198
Love, *See* Non-violence
Ludendorff, 55

Macdonald, J. R., 417, 432
Machinery, 34, 102, 173, 226, 435
Maginot Line, 236
Mahabharata, 118, 120, 124, 283, 301, 314, 316
Mahomed, 191
Malabar, 472
Malaya States, 178
Manchuria, 164, 220
Mankind, 36, 111, 117, 119, 137, 149, 168, 171-2, 176, 194, 200, 204, 207, 209, 212, 214, 220, 227, 233, 266, 280-1, 297, 307, 311, 334, 340, 348, 361, 420-4, 427-8, 431-2, 436, 443, 446, 465
Manoranjan Babu 260-1
Marriage and Restraint, 42, 45
Maude, Dr. Royden, 380-2
Mauritius, 404
Marx, Karl, 179
Marwari Relief Society, 391-3
Mashruwala, Kishorlal, 135, 244, 480, 487
Mays, Dr., 127-8, 131
Meads, 132
Mehta, Dr. Jivraj, 19
Mehta, Dr. Pranjivandas, 19
Menon, Damodar, 467
Mesopotamia, 15
Migration *See Hijrat*
Militarism, 55, 179, 326, 424, 426-7, 434, 480-1
Military, 133-6, 139, 144, 164, 252, 323, 389, 402, 450-2, 460
—budget, 6, 93, 237
—defence, 296, 312
—mentality, 107
—plans, 400
—preparation, 426
—programme, 94-9, 100
—service, 106-8, 268, 431-2
—training, 1, 20, 38-9, 73, 79, 93, 236, 246, 423-7
Minorities, 258, 443-4, 469, 474
Missionaries, 169-71, 192, 207
Models of Comparative Prose, 124
Mohammedans, *See* Muslims
Montagu, E., 170
Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, 25
Moral authority, 450
—force (courage, fibre, strength), 52, 65, 94, 112, 172, 257, 284, 306, 314, 328
—pressure, 466, 476
—prestige, 315, 361
—rearmament, 208-10
—support, 240, 250, 256-7, 267, 314-6
—value, 374

Moral weakness, 419
Moslems, *See* Muslims
Moss, L. B., 169
Mott, Dr., 164, 168-70
Muller-Lehning, A., 430
Munich, Peace of, 454
Munshi, K. M., 324
Muras, M. S., 183
Muslim League, 251, 287, 332, 355, 370
Muslims, 4, 6-7, 10-4, 17-8, 25, 52-3, 76-7, 110, 136-7, 161, 178, 196, 198, 206, 236, 239, 252-4, 258, 261, 298, 302, 322, 343, 347, 363, 445, 451-2, 463-4, 467, 469-70, 474
Mussalmans, *See* Muslims
Mussolini, 107, 129, 133, 151, 165, 174-5, 232, 281, 317
My Magazine, 82

Nag, Kalidas, 146
Naidu, Sarojini, 20
Naoroji Sisters, 98
Napoleon, 82
Nation, 64-5
National freedom, 485
Nationalism, 160, 225, 426, 440
Navajivan, 75
Nazarenes, 83-4
Nazis, *See* Nazism
Nazism, 177, 179, 198, 203-4, 218, 269, 280, 305, 307, 319-21, 361, 373-4, 399, 408, 414, 436, 438, 471, 474
Negroes, 115-6, 127-8, 183, 192, 253, 269, 401
Nehru Committee (Plan) 100, 423, 425, 429
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 98, 182, 210, 223, 234, 277, 310, 348, 395, 402, 404, 461, 466-7
Nehru, Motilal, 326
Nero, 107, 265
Netherlands, 421
New era, 401
New order, 221, 286-7, 349, 374, 385, 459, 468
New York Times, 92
New Zealand, 464
Newman, Cardinal, 4
News Chronicle, 472
Newton, 2
Niemoeller, 179-80
Nietzsche, 54, 306
Nitobe, Inazo, 424
No-rent campaign, 468
Non-co-operation, 2-5, 7, 9, 14, 17, 19, 41, 54, 59, 60, 74, 106-8, 115, 138-9, 147, 197-8, 231, 256, 265, 269-70, 281, 284, 296, 348, 351, 358, 386, 441, 465, 467-8, 480-2, 484-5
Non-resistance, 61-3, 143
Non-violence, 375, 382, 386, 402, 409-12
—absolute, 40-2
Non-violence-Abyssinia, 110-1, 129
—activest force, 105, 113, 129, 139, 143, 172
—administration, 324
—against constituted authority, 284, 297, 300, 322
—aggression, 238, 249, 265, 446
—Allies, 267
—almost, 323, 337, 341
—alphabet, 299
—America, *See* America
—anarchy, 324
—anger, 329
—animal life, 71, 74, 79, 343, 419
—application, 354
—Arabs, 163
—Arjuna, 120-1, 330
—arms, 281, 332, 334-5, 362-3
—army, 101, 109, 134, 138, 142, 238, 273-4, 285, 299-300, 312-3, 325, 453, 456, 468
—art, 236, 271, 308, 481
—at heart, 239, 276, 279, 295, 475
—*Atman*, 335
—attributes of, 311, 375
—axioms, 111-2
—Azad, Abul Kalam, 310
—behaviour, 392
—best field, 299
—between individuals, 186-7, 265
—between man and man, 44
—Bible, 123, 176
—Bolshevism, 27
—bravery, *See* Bravery
—Britain, 111-2, 143-4, 151-2, 157, 296, 305, 320
—British, 263, 280-1
—brute force, *See*—violence
—Buddha, 129, 191, 308-9, 371
—Buddhism, 146
—capacity to generate heat, 180
—caricature, 299
—Champaran, 245
—chaos, 470
—children, 119, 329
—China, 147-8, 172-3, 183-6, 190, 192
—Christ, Jesus, 117, 132, 179-81, 191, 371
—civil disobedience (resistance), 344, 452, 472
—common ground, 350-1, 466, 476
—common people, 2
—communal clashes, *See* riots
—communism, 487
—complete, 24, 72, 110, 292, 330, 341
—conditions, 119, 126, 468, 476
—conduct, 392
—Congress, *See* Congress
—conscientious objectors, 14, 38, 83-4, 117-8
—conscious, 137
—constructive, 139, 197

Non-violence—constructive programme, 341-2, 399
—constructive work, 291
—cowardice, 1, 49, 59, 63, 77, 94, 110, 137, 141, 154, 194, 243, 334-5, 362, 364, 418
—co-workers in, 323
—creed, 9, 114, 135, 150, 158, 200, 204, 237, 275-6, 288-9, 315, 353, 391-2, 395-6, 449, 480
—criminal tribes, 328
—cult, 471
—Czechoslovakia (Czechs), 149-51, 157-8, 162, 175, 273
—dacoities, 276, 278-9, 302, 328, 331
—Daniel, 132
—death, 455
—defeat, 111, 265
—defence, 10-1, 143, 149-50, 230, 235, 238, 260-1, 271, 274, 278, 297, 306-7, 417, 446-7, 481
—definition, 343
—degrees, 230
—deliberate, 331
—democracy, 151, 159, 199, 200, 203-4, 269-70, 292
—demonstration, 313
—Denmark, 266-7
—dictators, 205
—direct action, 113
—disarmament, 44, 85, 89
—discipline, 130
—discovery, 2, 282
—distortion, 77
—doctrine, 330
—domestic sphere, 292, 299, 300, 322
—Doukhobours, 253
—economics, 30
—education, 488
—effective use, 261
—efficacy, 235, 262-3, 276, 301, 482
—effort, 342
—egg-eating, 322
—Einstein, 106-7
—electricity, 113
—elusive in working, 180
—England, *See*—Britain
—Englishmen, 112, 231, 280-2, 303, 320
—entire, 41, 44, 58
—ether, 113
—Europe, 29-30, 106, 108, 273-4, 281
—expedient, 59
—experiment, 252, 264-5, 284-5, 291, 303, 306-7, 341, 449, 456
—expression, 450
—factory civilization, 243
—failure, 382, 452
—faith, 113, 140, 144-5, 158, 180, 187-8, 191, 194, 205-6, 235, 241, 274-5, 285-8, 291, 298, 301, 303, 310, 313, 371, 394, 406, 434, 449, 470-1, 475
Non-violence—family, *See* **Domestic** sphere
—Fascists, 203
—fasting, 411
—fear, 278-9, 299, 302, 335
—first condition, 267
—flower of, 178
—for winning freedom, 28, 58, 85, 87, 94, 100, 134, 150, 158, 264, 267, 297, 308-10, 315, 324, 332, 350, 356, 418, 446-7, 458, 465-6, 468-71, 476
—force of, 274, 308
—foreign invasion, 143, 183-4, 235, 276, 284, 306, 317-8, 320, 322, 325, 330-1
—France, 152, 157, 273
—freedom of action, 471
—freedom of speech, 351, 359, 360, 467, 471
—freedom to propagate, 473
—fruits, 332
—Gandhi Seva Sangh, *See* **Gandhi Seva Sangh**
—Gandhiji, *See* Gandhiji
—gangsterism, 164-5, 278
—Germany, 179-80, 295-6, 320-1, 323
—Gita, 117-8, 120, 123-4, 326, 330
—God, faith in, 119, 145, 191, 194, 283, 321, 335
—goondaism, *See*—hooliganism
—Government, 4, 74, 79, 230, 250, 332
—great powers, 157-9
—greatest force, 63, 110, 113-4, 132
—group, 265
—half-baked, 325
—hatred, 263
—heroes of, 231
—heroism, 189
—Hinduism, 3, 123-4, 241
—Hindus, 6, 252, 322, 343, 362-3
—Hitler, 152-3, 168, 174-6, 179-81 273, 296, 305, 320-1, 456
—Hobhouse, Emily, 189
—honest endeavour, 300
—honour, 122, 152, 335
—hooliganism, 58-9, 230, 271, 302 344-5, 452
—human nature, 113, 116, 138, 139, 141, 149, 175, 267, 296
—human relations (species), 322, 343
—humility, 187
—imperfect, 291, 333
—imperialism, 119
—implications, 111, 118-9, 142, 230, 243, 299-300, 322, 354, 454, 481
—impotence, 240
—imprisonment, 41, 43
—in every walk of life, 282, 302
—in thought, word and deed, 58, 103, 120, 137, 140, 256, 288-9, 449
—independence, 142, 250, 265, 275, 316, 453, 474

Non-violence-India, *See* India
—India's freedom, 366
—individual, 2
—infallible weapon, 308
—intellect, 290
—intensity, 530
—internal anarchy (disorders), 276-9, 284-5, 309, 322, 331-2
—international relations, 28, 41, 43-4, 101, 159, 170, 181, 280
—invasion, 481
—invincible, 336
—inward growth, 142
—Japan, 147
—Jews, 161-3, 165-6, 167-9, 172, 174, 179, 200-1, 207, 320
—*jivadaya*, *See*—animal life
—justice, 267
—Khan, Abdul Gaffar, 153, 286, 297-8, 335
—Khudai Khidmatgars, 297
—Krishna, 330, 362-3
—King of Heaven, 115
—labour, 270
—lamp of, 58
—law and, 40
—law of, 2, 86, 101, 121-2, 198, 333, 387
—law of life, 119, 121, 186-7, 199, 266
—law of our being, 3, 75, 120-2, 131
—law of our species, 2, 243
—law of the human race, 119, 121
—law of the regenerate man, 228
—law, supreme, 172, 266, 301
—legislation, 292
—lesson, 267, 297, 311, 446
—limitations, 99, 332
—limited, 310-1, 313, 343, 448
—limits, 322
—living belief, 286, 288, 291, 299-300
—living force, 200
—logical consequences, 87
—love, 113, 118, 121-2, 126, 129-32, 166, 181, 190, 265, 343
—loyalty to, 325
—lynching, 115
—Mahabharata, 118, 120, 301
—Mahomed, 191
—man as Spirit, 311
—manifesto, 487
—mankind, 111, 116, 119, 121-2, 176, 334
—manual work, 439
—march to, 448
—masses, 30-1, 87, 91, 119, 129-31, 158, 168, 227, 243, 245, 252, 262, 265, 284-5, 291, 474
—mass movement, 485
—matchless force (weapon), 111, 281
—mathematics of, 128
—means, 8, 331
—meat-eating, 322, 343
—message, 277

Non-violence—method, 280, 282, 287, 294, 305, 307, 358, 447, 482
—mightiest force, 180, 303
—military training, 38-9, 74, 79, 93
—ministers, 244
—minority, 131, 456, 474, 487
—miracle, 129-30, 144
—mixed, 266
—most perfect demonstration, 245
—movement, 334
—Muslims (Mussalmans), 7, 13, 322, 343 *See* also Mussalmans
—Mussolini, 174-5
—nations, 158-9, 180, 187, 199, 266
—Nazis, 203, 319-20, 471
—Negroes, 115-6, 127-8, 194
—Nehru, Jawaharlal, 310
—never-failing, 143
—new fields, 284, 299
—no abject surrender, 294
—no age-limit, 130
—no meek submission, 2
—non-co-operation, *See* Non-co-operation
—non-resistance, 61-3, 143
—Norway, 266-7, 273
—not a cloistered virtue, 243
—not a negative concept, 485
—not negative, 113
—of the brave, 59, 139-40, 154, 194, 240, 243, 245, 291, 297, 334-6, 452-4, 456
—of the helpless, 451
—of the highest type, 331
—of the powerful, 451
—of the strong, 3, 94, 109, 112, 128, 134, 136-7, 143, 167, 179, 236, 240, 249, 252-3, 267, 269, 274-7, 284, 287, 300, 449, 451, 456
—of the weak, 3, 109, 112, 128, 131, 136-7, 154, 167, 179, 236, 245, 250, 270, 275, 284, 371, 449, 451-2
—on mass scale, 113, 129, 132, 156
—only true force, 114
—organization, 199, 233-5, 394
—organized, 150, 307, 331, 446, 454
—out and out, 50, 211, 213, 312-3, 322
—pacifism, *See* Pacifism
—passion, 276
—passive, 200, 250
—Pathans, 153-5, 297-8
—peace, 481
—people, 476
—perfect, 229, 292, 299-300, 335
—permanent part, 270
—physical strength, 252
—plan, 328
—plant of slow growth, 231
—Poland, 226-7, 273, 323, 337-8
—Police force, 331-3

Non-violence-policy, 158, 200, 210, 230, 264, 267, 275-6, 334, 353, 447, 449, 458, 480-1
—political sphere, 371
—political weapon, 237
—politics, 292, 322
—positive, 364
—possessions, 114, 116, 119, 317, 328
—possibilities, 99, 153, 190, 282, 307
—potency, 146, 256, 265
—power of, 229, 234, 372, 452
—Prahlad, 122
—preparation, 278, 296, 308, 454
—programme, 5, 291
—progressive, 310-11
—propagation, 477
—punishment, 42, 43
—pure, 265, 299, 300-1, 332
—Quran, 298
—Rajagopalachari, C., 286
—real, 452
—reconciling, 364
—refusal of military service, 106
—relative, 419
—religion of, 2, 3, 241
—researches, 380
—resistance, *See* Non-violent resistance
—resistance of the soul, 44, 318
—resistance, unarmed, 344
—right to preach, 478-9
—riots, 75-7, 134-5, 136-8, 139, 142, 230, 239, 246, 262, 276-7, 284-5, 311-2, 331, 344-5
—sacrifice, 119, 122, 335
—*sadhana*, 289-91
—satyagraha, 40-3, 103, 317-8, 332, 475
—science of, 152, 308
—scope, 322, 343
—self-acting force, 113
—self-defence, 59, 94, 254, 260-1, 336
—self-government, 134
—self-immolation, 115, 134, 138, 142, 344, 453
—selflessness, 330
—self-purification, 111, 245
—self-respect, 318
—shield, 333
—Sikhs, 470
—Sindh, 246, 252, 362-4
—social virtue, 179, 181
—socialism, 486
—society based on 197-9, 265, 292, 308-10, 331
—soldiers, 108-9, 284-5, 299, 306, 337
—soul force (power), 167
—soul, thing of the, 147
—sovereign remedy, 227, 473
—spinning wheel, 129, 243, 291, 302
—spirit, 131, 197-8, 223, 456
—spiritual food, 135
—splendour, 310
Non-violence-standard, 252
—State, 106-8, 265, 292, 323-4, 328, 333, 443-4, 469
—steadfastness, 317
—strength, 1-3, 94, 111, 134, 137, 252, 255, 277, 321, 372, 448, 451-3, 466
—strictest, 325
—strongest force, *See* mightiest force
—struggle, 356
—sub-human species, 343
—subtlest force, 303
—suffering, 2, 43, 65
—Swaraj, 23, 28, 85, 130, 138-40, 341, 450, 459, 470
—Sweden, 266
—Switzerland, 107-9
—teacher, 290, 309
—teaching, 308, 330
—technique, 131, 134, 192, 264, 364
—terrorism, 250
—test, 288, 299, 312, 338, 455, 470
—thorough, 325
—torch, 276
—totalitarianism, 437
—training for, 95, 114-5, 129-31, 140, 142, 168, 187, 228, 230, 265, 271, 335-6, 439
—training in arms, *See* military training
—triumph, 454
—true, 236, 240, 244, 276, 279, 289, 292, 299, 328, 331
—true value of, 412
—truth, 40, 57, 68, 87, 105-6, 121, 127, 135
—unadulterated, 140, 143, 244, 264, 275, 358, 452
—united action, 192
—universal, 28, 200, 303, 308-11, 322, 339
—unlimited, 343
—utmost (uttermost), 456, 471
—victory, 111
—village economy, 243
—village industries, 302
—violence, 1, 3, 6, 13, 27, 30, 43, 57, 60, 65, 71, 77, 80, 86, 94, 99-101, 103, 105, 109, 111-2, 129-33, 136-7, 139-40, 146-7, 149, 159, 175, 187, 191, 194, 197-8, 205, 227, 230, 239-40, 251, 273, 278, 285, 292, 303-4, 316, 324-6, 331-2, 335-6, 394-5, 398, 468, 470, 481
—virtue, 448
—votaries, 244, 332, 335
—war, 87, 121, 125-6, 143, 280-1, 294, 340-2, 417-8, 446, 473, 476-9,
—weakening, 394
—weapon, 331, 372-3, 446, 455, 474,
—West, the, 118, 147, 168-9, 267, 311, 364

Non-violence-white art, 228
—whole creation, 113, 322
—women, 40, 42, 59, 76, 109, 119, 122, 130, 153, 155-6, 236, 323
—working of, 321
—world, 2, 207, 228, 277, 299, 305, 317, 364
—young men, 119
Non-violent resistance, 29, 44, 71, 96, 128, 143, 152-3, 167-8, 170, 175, 202, 235, 250-1, 264-6, 269-70, 273, 300, 344, 348, 357-8, 364, 389, 397-9, 418, 459, 487
Norway, 266-7, 273, 481

Occident, 431
O'dwyerism, 7
Old Testament, 253
Orientals, 425-6, 431
Ossietzky, 179
Ottoman Empire, 219
Oxford Group Movement, 208

Pacifism, 38, 69, 92, 123, 143-4, 172, 183, 203-4, 238, 256-7, 380-2, 424, 435, 440-1
Pacifists, *See* Pacifism
Paderewski, 217
Page, Kirby, 56-7, 203
Pal, Bipin Chandra, 12-3
Palestine, 50, 159-60, 163, 205-6, 440, 443, 445
Pandavas, 120
Pan-Islamism, 12
Pant, G. B., 324
Parvati, 338
Passive resistance, 21, 70, 128, 150, 231, 235, 272, 423, 425
Patanjali, 338
Patel, Sardar Vallabhbhai, 98, 283-6, 328, 371, 395
Pathans, 4, 6, 153-5, 297-8, 325
Paton, W., 169
Paul, St., 113, 424, 464
Pax International, 83
Peace, 191, 212
—America, *See* America
—at Munich, 454
—brigade, 144-6, 246, 275
—British Empire, 126, 210
—cats and mice, 81
—cause of, 81
—China, *See* China
—Christ's Gospel, 179, 191
—communal, 110, 133, 470
—conscientious objectors, 202-3
—dictated, 223
—disarmament, 472
—doctrine, 120
—doom of, 116-7
—foundation, 381
—Europe, 147, 149, 152
Peace,-France, 200
—freedom, 234, 446
—Gandhiji, *See* Gandhiji
—Germany, 55
—Gita, 124
—God, 250
—gospel of, 64
—Hitler, 233, 272
—honour, 149, 151, 454
—imperialism, 219, 247
—India, *See* India
—international, 176, 197
—Islam, 470
—Jews, 207
—Kellogg Pact, 89
—lovers of, 78, 81, 249, 416, 475
—manly, 262
—man's dream, 37
—messenger, 145
—methods, 126
—mission, 147
—movement, 55, 118, 250, 364
—Muslims, 470
—Napoleon, 82
—nations, 65, 83
—new order, 294
—non-co-operation, 358
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—non-violent army, 134
—of the grave, 262
—organization, 366-7
—pacifist, 381
—patched-up, 294
—permanent, 116
—Poland, 217
—Prince of, 117
—propagation, 342
—rebellion, 475
—riots, 261-2
—Russia, 152
—Sheppard, Dick, 121
—societies, 108
—society based on, 258
—soldiers of, 153-4, 366-7
—sufferings, 57
—truth, 57
—victories, 294
—war, 257, 294, 446
—war resisters, 69, 86, 88, 241, 248
—warriors of, 191
—West, 83, 91, 147, 417
—women, 89, 156
—world, 37, 82, 85, 92, 116, 150, 156, 210, 232-3, 327, 334, 407, 428, 459-61, 470, 472
Peace Pledge Union, 201-2
Persians, 132
Peter, 382
Petit, Mithubai, 98
Physical culture, 38-9
—force, *See* Brute force
—sciences, *See* Science
Polak, 207

Poland, 47, 55, 216-8, 225-7, 232, 248, 250, 273, 323-4, 337-8, 444, 481
Poles, *See* Poland
Police force, 28, 42, 133-4, 136, 139, 144, 164, 197, 246, 252, 258, 312, 324-5, 331-3, 450-3, 460-1
Polish Corridor, *See* Poland
Political awakening, 483
—power, 483
—struggle for freedom, 483
Pollard, F. E., 365
Ponsonby, 431
Prahlad, 122, 477
Prayer, 156, 170, 191, 212, 217, 251
Princes, 136, 287, 332, 350, 370, 452, 466, 476
Pritam, 311
Prithvisingh, 289
Pritt, D. N., 465
Prohibition, 97, 270
Prophet, (Mahomed), 11
Provincial autonomy, 464
Punjab, 6, 13-4, 25, 464, 475
Purists, 395
Pyarelal, 200, 207

Quakers, 247, 437
Quaker International Centre, 247
Quit India, 414
Quran, 121, 298

Radhakrishnan, 249
Rajagopalachari, C., 98, 284, 286-7, 323, 354-6, 395, 467
Rajendraprasad, 98, 243
Rajkot fasts, 411
Rajputs, 4, 6
Rama, 2, 63, 303, 326-7, 477
Ramayana, 124, 376
Ramayana (of Tulsidas), 326-7
Ravana, 2, 63, 327, 329
Ravishankar Maharaj, 302
Reconstruction, 384
Red Cross, 73, 108
Religious resistance, *See* Civil resistance
Republic, 386
Rhodesia, 183
Riots, *See* Communal riots
Rolland, Romain, 319, 422
Rome, 425
Roosevelt, President, 209
Rosz, Colin, 426
Round Table Conferences, 268
Rowlatt Act, 25, 268, 297
Rul, 26
Rumania, 225
Runciman, Lord, 438
Ruskin, 413
Russia, 7, 26-7, 57, 67, 78, 85, 101-3, 152, 198, 227, 230, 244, 253, 407, 413, 430, 441, 444, 460-1, 481, 486, 488

Salisbury, Lord, 64
Salt famine, 403
Samuel, Lord, 207
Sankange, T. D., 183
Sapru, Tej Bahadur, 12
Sardul Singh, 467
Satan, 4
Satya Deva, 424
Satyagraha, 2, 28, 41-5, 70, 95, 103, 153, 162-3, 174, 196, 204, 216, 264, 269, 272, 297, 302, 317-8, 332, 334, 347, 352, 354, 374, 382, 386, 411, 434-5, 437, 440-2, 448, 459, 463, 474
Sayre, J. N., 92, 94
Science, 143, 163, 272, 301, 429, 435
Scorched earth, 388-90
Self-defence, 59-60, 93, 202, 247, 253-5, 259-61, 278, 336-7, 447
Self-determination, 219, 221
Self-existence, 460
Self-extinction, 463
Self-government, 36, 134, 444, 451
Self-immolation, 43, 115, 138, 142, 344, 453
Self-purification, 32, 42, 111, 114, 245
Self-respect, 318
Self-restraint, 327, 350, 463-4, 475
Self-suppression, 463
Sen, K. C., 391
Sermon on the Mount, 48, 192, 381, 420
Servant, The, 4
Sevagram, 371, 387, 407
Shah, Purushottam, 75
Shelley, 173
Sheppard, Canon (Dick), 117, 120-3, 201
Shiva, 338
Shraddhanandji, 258-9
Siegfried Line, 236
Sikhs, 4, 6, 236, 325, 349, 484
Simon Commission, 268
Simplicity, 30, 34
Sindh, 246-7, 251-5, 258-60, 336-7, 362-4, 464
Singapore, 375, 414
Sinn Feinism, 3
Sita, 329
Sitaramayya, B. Pattabhi, 98
Slavery, 358, 401
Smith, E., 169
Socialism, 349, 423, 426
Society of Friends, 364
Soga, Mina, 183
Soldiers, 1, 6, 8-9, 13, 16-7, 28, 63, 101, 104, 106, 109, 153, 226-8, 236, 240, 258, 265, 273, 280, 285, 299, 306, 319, 337, 356-7, 360, 375-9, 391-3, 434, 481
Soul, Dignity of the, *See* Soul force
—force, 2, 36, 63, 82-3, 167, 239, 284, 317-8, 373, 380, 424
—Science of 143
Sovereignty, 197

Spain, 47, 150, 164, 220, 222, 250, 267, 434
Sparta, 425
Spinning, 369
—wheel, 33-4, 97-8, 103, 129, 131, 243, 269, 289, 291, 302, 370, 449
Spirit, Commonwealth of the, 37
—Strength of the, *See* Soul force
—*v.* Sword, 82-3
Stable, Justice, 465
Stalin, 129
Star, the, 272
State, 34, 48, 55, 80, 106-8, 260, 264-5, 292, 328, 333, 425, 431, 460, 468-9
Statesman, The, 117-8, 120-2, 179, 181, 358-9
Steiner, R., 128
Stephenson, 180
Stimson, 471-2
Stokes, S., 4-5
Strikes, 468-9
Strunk, 175
Swadeshi, 5, 40
Swaraj, 6, 12, 15-8, 23-4, 28-30, 33, 38, 61, 72, 77, 85, 95, 130, 136, 138-40, 243, 259, 289, 291, 309-11, 324, 334, 341-2, 351, 353, 420, 450, 459, 465-6, 468, 476
Sweden, 266
Swinton, General, 66
Switzerland, 107-9
Symonds, 131
Syria, 50-3, 444

Takali, 370
Takaoka, 177-8
Tamerlane, 169
Tammany Hall methods, 482
Tao, 148
Tapasya, 341
Taxes, Refusal to pay, 432
Tcherkoff, V., 78, 80
Tema, S. S., 183, 192
Ten Days That Shook the World, 460
Terrorism, 68-9, 117, 120, 174, 250 363, 449
Thakersy, Lady, 411
The Jewish Contribution to Civilization (Roth), 163
The New Immigration (Roberts), 62
The Power of Non-violence (Gregg) 118
The Revolution of Destruction (H. Rauschning), 320
The Story of My Experiments with Truth (Gandhiji), 124
The Survey Graphic, 380
The World Tomorrow, 417
Theol, 48
Thermopylæ, 109
Thorne, S. J., 364
Thurman, Dr., 113-6
Thurman, Mrs., 115
Tibet, 39
Tilak, 308
Times of India, The, 356
Timur, Prof. 306
Tobias, 127
Tolstoy, 78, 100, 418, 420, 422, 426, 429 487
Totalitarianism, 159, 177, 230, 357, 437
Trans-Jordan, 443
Transvaal, 108, 162
Travancore, 128
Truth, 26, 31, 40-1, 57, 63, 68, 75, 85, 87, 103, 106-7, 110, 113, 121, 127, 135, 177, 191, 203, 206, 228, 242, 282, 295, 301, 308, 311, 313, 315, 317, 320, 357, 414, 444, 449-50, 476-7, 482
Truth, 66
Tsheka Ulibajet (Saprudin), 48
Turkey, 17, 25, 225
Turks, *See* Turkey

Unarmed resistance, *See* Non-violent resistance
Union Jack, 39
United Kingdom, *See* Britain
Unto this last, 413
Untouchability, 18, 23, 96-7, 110, 126, 128, 159, 171, 269, 332, 469
Upanishads, 124
U. S. A., *See* America
U. S. S. R., *See* Russia

Vaishnavas, 343
Venkatappayya, 98
Versailles, Treaty of, 176, 203, 219
Vibhishana, 326
Viceroy, 8, 136, 213-5, 217, 231, 240, 282, 293-4, 326, 345, 350-1, 359-62, 364, 452, 462, 464-5, 467, 469-70, 473, 475
Vidyarthi, Ganesh Shankar, 252
Village Government, 387
—industries, 34-5, 269, 302, 439, 450
—migration to, 385
—regeneration, 110
—re-organization, 385
—Swaraj, 386-7
Violence, 230, 314, 381, 399-400, 402, 484-5
—action, 133
—active, 172
—Allies, 267
—America, 198
—armament, 103-4
—army, 130
—badge, 335
—basis of society, 266
—begets violence, 132
—black art, 228
—Bolshevism, 27
—bravery, 335
—British power (rule), 133, 141
—calculated, 161

Violence-capacity for offering, 112
—children, 153, 319, 329
—civil disobedience, 472
—clergy, 424
—conduct, 393
—Congress, 228, 235-6, 239, 244, 344, 352-3
—cowardice, 1
—deadly poison, 301
—defeat, 111
—defence, 1, 40, 42, 202, 237, 250, 260-1, 263-4, 423, 484
—democracy, 198, 202, 269-70
—diminishing, 311
—doctrine, 43
—doctrine of the sword, 3
—doom of, 311
—drift towards, 94
—effectiveness (efficacy), 129, 266
—end of, 111
—ending a calf's life, 131
—England, 198
—enthronement, 198
—equipment, 326
—Europe, 30, 48
—exploitation, 30
—faith, 191, 481
—Fascism, 218, 474
—father, 99
—fear, 334
—forces, 88
—foreign invasion, 325
—France, 198
—freedom, 212, 248, 428
—freedom of speech, 473
—fury, 278
—futility, 147, 211, 266, 272, 435
—Gandhiji, 8, 27, 41, 75, 77, 101, 125, 242
—Germany, 149, 198, 266
—Gita, 330
—glorification, 218
—Government, 4, 467
—hatred, 263, 266
—Hitler, 129, 149, 161, 203, 290
—hooligans, 344
—imperialism, 474
—India, 112, 211, 236
—inefficacy, 446
—Italy, 149, 198
—Jews, 172
—justice, 211
—killing, 80
—law, 40
—law of the beast, 228
—law of the brute, 2
—legislation, 292
—liberty, 468
—logic of, 468
—love, 131
—lying, 57
—man as animal, 311
—mania, 416

Violence-mass disobedience, 468-9
—masses, 30-1
—means, 145, 201
—mental, 256
—method, 1, 27, 58, 105, 137, 307
—mob, 127, 244, 448
—moral, 4
—mother of, 57
—Munich, 149
—Mussalmans, 13
—Mussolini, 129
—nations, civilized, 89
—Nazism, 218, 474
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—Norway, 266
—of the brave, 289
—offensive, 250
—oppressor, 77
—organized, 150, 199, 272
—party, 353
—Pathans, 297-8
—physical, 4, 256
—played out, 211
—Poland, 227
—possession, 72
—power, 111
—practice, 129
—prayer, 191
—preaching, 463
—refusal to resort to, 201
—resistance, 125, 128, 175-6, 202, 390
—Russia, 198, 244
—saturation point, 311
—school of, 3
—science, 203
—scientific, 150
—self-defence, 201, 260, 336-7
—Sind, 363
—Sinn Feinism, 3
—soldiers, 109, 306
—spirit, 336
—Stalin, 129
—State, 89, 468
—strength, 94
—struggle, 141
—submission to, 427
—success, 30
—supremacy, seeming, 94
—symbol of, 103
—system, based on, 100, 223
—technique, 149
—terrorists, 449
—tornado, 169
—training, 228, 260, 278
—triumph, 149
—truth, 57
—unadulterated, 140
—undiluted, 148
—unpractical, 202
—unscientific, 203
—untruth, 58, 75, 105
—un-violent, 100
—war, 70-1, 125, 202, 222-3

Violence-weakness, 94
—weapons, 189, 297, 335
—West, 147
—women, 40, 42, 109
—world, 2, 88, 169, 197, 202, 224, 340, 416, 453
—wrong, 201
Violent resistance, 358
Vishwamitra Rishi, 402
Vyasa, 83, 316

War, 148, 150-1, 162, 166, 190, 197, 212, 366, 374 376, 380-81, 390, 401, 439, 484, 488
—aggression, 183
—armament, 446
—art, 316
—bloody, 334
—British Empire, 126, 417, 422, 433
—brutalizing, 280
—children, 222, 270, 319-20, 434, 464
—China, *See* China
—chivalry, 319
—civil 428
—civilization, 438
—coloured races, 418, 435
—conflagration, 342-3
—Congress, 150, 210-1, 214, 218, 224, 347
—crushing burdens, 446
—curse, 277, 280
—degradation, 446
—delusion and folly, 118
—democracy, 269-70, 280, 435, 464
—destruction, 217, 314, 316, 434, 438, 446
—destruction of liberty, 201-2, 446
—dictatorship, 152
—electro-technical 425
—engines of, 430
—England, 152, 155, 417, 432
—Europe, 419, 445-6
—exploitation, 86-8
—Fascism, 218, 436
—food-stuff, 368-9
—for freedom, 56, 248, 446
—futility, 82, 85, 128, 203
—Gandhiji's opposition to, 68-75, 78-82, 86-8, 160-1, 182, 212, 214, 357
—Germany, 162, 207-8, 319
—Gita, 124
—glorification of, 218
—harmful, 427
—hatred of, 427
—Hinduism, 123
—Hitler, 216
—horrors, 66, 84-5, 94, 120, 155, 183, 222, 227, 248, 434-5
—humanitarian, 383
—humanizing, 67
—imperialism, 222-3, 232, 446
War-India, *See* India
—industrialism, 425
—Jews, 207
—lying, *See*—untruth
—Mahabharata, 316
—mankind, 280
—masses, 474
—menace, 423
—method of ending, 197
—modern 419, 426, 428-9, 433-4, 438
—Moloch, 227
—moral support, 314, 316
—morality, 268
—morally wrong, 427
—motives, 233, 316, 388
—national, 430, 459, 465
—Nazism, 218
—new order, 294-5
—no love in, 148
—no war movement, *See*—war against
—non-co-operation, 358
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—of defence, 204, 264, 429
—of exploitation, 431
—of principle, 435
—opposition to, 68-9, 71, 73-5, 78-82, 86-8, 202-4, 340
—outlawry, 89
—panic, 270-1, 278-9
—peace, 256, 295, 446
—personal participation, 431
—political, 383
—preparations, 92, 95, 276
—Red Cross, 75, 108, 431
—renunciation of, 85, 89-90
—resistance, means of, 427
—resisters, 389, 391-2
—revolution, social, 429
—science of, 152, 316
—*Sermon on the Mount*, 48
—social struggle, 441
—spoils, 234, 269
—substitute for, 473, 478
—suffering nations, 464
—tax, 401
—'to end war', 202, 204, 230, 435
—totalitarian, 433
—unmitigated evil, 270
—untruth, 316
—venereal disease, 67
—victories, 294
—violence, 70, 80, 125, 143, 169, 202, 316, 446
—war against, 49, 74, 78, 80-1, 84, 87, 91-2, 109, 117-8, 120-1, 125-6, 188, 202-3, 240, 424-6, 434
—war resisters, *See* war against
—West, 37, 84, 88, 96, 117, 417-8, 420
—wickedness, 68
—women, *See* Women
—world, 37, 44, 231, 424

War-wrong act, *See*—bad in essence;
Washington, George, 21
Wellington, 2
West, 200, 380
—civilization, 102
—clergy, 424
—Congress, *See* Congress
—culture, 102
—democracy, 219, 230, 269
—economic breakdown, 439
—Gandhiji, 26, 32-3, 36-7, 41, 147, 157, 212
—Germany, 437
—glamour, 94
—India, *See* India
—industrialism, 425
—invasion, 102
—Japan, 178
—Jews, 163
—khadi, 439
—machines, 418
—military spirit, 96
—moral rearmament, 208
—nations, 91, 94, 158, 169
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—pacifism, 172
—peace, *See* Peace
—progress, 102
—Russia, 102
—scientists, 341
—seekers after truth, 40
—spinning wheel, 33
—States, 428
—starving millions, 29
—violence, 146
—votaries of, 481
—war, *See* War
—world, 29, 37, 83, 102
What War Means (Timperley), 182
Which Way to Peace? (B. Russell), 435
Working Committee, (Congress), 15-6, 135, 139, 142, 150, 210-1, 213, 218-9, 227, 230, 235, 240-5, 274-9, 283-8, 290-1, 295-6, 298-9, 309, 314, 323, 346, 348, 351, 354-5, 412, 445-7, 454-7, 460, 462, 470, 474, 478, 480
World, 2, 35, 88, 93, 103, 172, 176, 201, 237, 245, 269, 273, 301, 308, 315, 325, 327, 407, 446, 453-5, 471, 473
—Allies, 233, 267
—armaments, 93, 429, 471
—armed defence, 247
—Balkanized, 84
—barbarism, 459
—Britain, 88, 238, 351
—China, *See* China
—commonwealth of the spirit, 37
—Congress, 227, 234
—conscience, 84
World-crisis, 212, 223, 447
—deliverance, 277
—democracy, 220
—dependent races, 240
—disarmament, 459
—Englishmen, 45, 224
—exploited nations, 224, 233
—external aggression, 446
—France, 272
—freedom, 223-4, 449
—Gandhiji, *See* Gandhiji
—history, 425, 429
—Hitler, 214, 216, 273
—imperialism, 223, 234-5
—India, *See* India
—industry, greatest, 92
—internal disorder, 446
—international, 267
—Jews, 163, 165
—militarization, 409
—nations, 406
—new consciousness, 32
—new order, 221-2, 294-5
—non-violence, *See* Non-violence
—peace, 37, 81, 85, 91, 116, 150, 156, 210, 233, 323, 459-60, 470
—politics, 485
—progress, 95, 166, 460
—remaking, 33
—ruin, 197
—satyagraha, 103, 437
—salvation 2
—self-destruction, 459
—spinning wheel, 291
—teachers, 191, 201
—unity, 433
—war, 36, 92, 231, 268, 277, 417, 427
—Western, 101
—whole, 32, 37, 45, 84, 155, 197, 204
World Tomorrow, The, 92
World War, (1914-18) 1, 19-25, 39, 56-7, 68-73, 75, 106, 109, 125-6, 160, 202, 218, 220, 248, 267-9, 357, 416-7, 422-3, 428, 433-5
World War, The present, 224-5, 227-9, 232-4, 238-9, 248-50, 257, 267, 270-1, 280-2, 294-6, 298, 307, 311, 314, 345-53, 356-62, 445, 462-77
Wu, Y. T., 183

Yerawda prison, 411
Young India, 17, 38, 42, 46, 52, 54, 78, 89, 91, 95, 259, 427, 442
Yudhishthira, 316
Yugoslavia, 481

Zamindars, 350, 452, 466, 476
Zulu Rebellion, 1, 21-2, 25, 73, 100, 188, 195, 416
Zulus, 419

END